

STRICTURES,
Miscellaneous and Comparative,
ON THE
CHURCHES of ROME,
ENGLAND and SCOTLAND:
WITH
OCCASIONAL REFERENCES
TO THE
CHARACTERISTIC MARKS
OF
ANTICHRIST.

By a LAYMAN.

Nihil tam firmum est cui periculum non sit, etiam ab
invalido.

Even now there are many ANTICHRISTS.—John.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE intention of the Writer, in the following Strictures, is, so far as plain argument and reasoning bear him successfully along, to bring back Christianity, the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, to its original obviousness and simplicity; in which, according to all just probability and expedience, Almighty God, the Father of Mankind, by the Ministry of *Christ* and his Apostles, willed and intended it to be preserved to the latest Posterity.—In attempting a work so novel and unpopular, as it instantly invalidates the faith of *established systems*, and boldly militates against antient, venerable, riveted and admired prejudices; it behoves the writer, in self-defence, to produce his Commission, which is no less than a *divine one*, and runs, Christian Reader, in these words, *Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven*, Matt. x. 32.—Magistrates of all ranks, from kings down to the most inferior guardians and conservators of the peace, act, or ought to act, only as they are commissioned.—Commissions signed on Earth are accounted valid: shall a Commission signed in Heaven be accounted invalid?—Impossible!—Shall the Establishments of *England* and *Scotland*, two inconsiderable spots in the map of our terraqueous globe, invest their members severally with ample powers of guardianship and protection; and shall an Establishment originating and ratified in Heaven, be inefficient respecting a similar investiture of its peculiar servants?—The question answers itself.—Every Christian is immediately authorized and called upon by God, according to his abilities and opportunities, to defend and inculcate that Religion, of which God himself is the Author, and *Jesus Christ* his Son, the Messenger and Dispenser: a call, an authority to continue in full force to the end of the world, so far as the Understanding, as Learning and Ingenuity *alone*, regulated by universal benevolence, shall, may, and ought to exert that force, —Here then is the LAYMAN'S Commission and its vouchers.

✠ The 3d Part of *Considerations on Religious Liberty*, promised to the Public, is now, under a new Title, contained in the present volume.



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Comparative Strictures, &c.

For it had been better for THEM not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after THEY have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them.

PETER.

I NEVER dip into Church History, but I am struck home with the conviction, how spurious their Doctrines must be, as Christians, who, as Men, had all the weaknesses, littlenesses, resentments, corrupt biasses, and unworthy passions of their nature. The deeper I dip, the deeper are these convictions. I am not less incredulous to suppose, that God would deposit the *Heavenly Manna, the Bread of Life, the Fountains of living Water*, in such *broken cisterns* and impure vessels, than I should be to suppose, that he himself, instead of order, loved confusion; instead of beauty, deformity; instead of light, darkness; loved pride, instead of humility; a haughty overbearing spirit, instead of meekness and lowliness of mind, in his Creatures of the human race: His authorizing and permitting his most holy and divine GOSPEL to pass, by modification, through such contaminated infectious hands, would not have been at all less surprizingly absurd, than his having chosen for his Beloved Son, and the Revealer of the Christian Dispensation, such a Character as *Judas Iscariot*, or *Simon Magus*, instead of JESUS CHRIST, *the faithful and true witness*. Judas Iscariot and Simon Magus were not under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; they had therefore

neither lot nor part in the Gospel. Who will be so hardy as to say, who of the hardiest sons of orthodoxy, that any General Council, Convocation, or Assembly of Divines, was ever under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit? nay, even one in fifty of the Members that composed them?—They themselves alledging they were so, proves them *bona fide* *not* to have been so; as spiritual pride is one of the most disqualifying sins of Christianity: a species of guilt that degraded Lucifer from the skies, once a son of glory and of light.

If we are to judge *ex post facto*, from innumerable faithful documents, under their signs manual, instead of the unerring Spirit of God, we are necessitated to conclude they were, one and all of them, in bondage to the God of this world; the God of Covetousness, the God of Ambition, and the God of Vain-glory: the *very false Prophets* and *false Christs*. I have not the smallest doubt, of whom our Blessed Saviour warns all Christians to beware, saying, *Behold, I have told you before* †. *They shall shew* (adds he) *great signs and wonders, and shall deceive many*.—Since the times of Constantine, they have continued to realize these specific titles of *false Christs* and *false Prophets*; have done *great signs and wonders*, and have deceived one generation after another. They have engrossed (our Bishops and dignified Clergy I mean) a great Part of the honours and riches of the world; they sit with Princes, live in palaces, and have a bench as Senators in the great Council of the Nation. These are *signs and wonders*, done by men who profess themselves the servants of the *meek and lowly Jesus*, altogether astonishing, and quite incredible, had we not the conviction of our senses, our eyes and our ears. We need not mention the Church of Rome for yet stronger proofs of these marks of reference. She indeed is Antichrist, primordial Antichrist, the *Abomination of desolation* spoken of by *Daniel the Prophet*, *standing in the holy place* ‡. Yet an Apostle has told us, that *even now there are many Antichrists*.—The ingenious, elegant, critical, but, alas! **SYSTEMATIC** Dr. Hurd, tells in one of his Sermons on Prophecy, that if the Church of Rome be indeed the

Scriptural

† Matt. xxiv. 25.

‡ Matt. xxiv. 15.

Scriptural Antichrist, then can there be no such thing as Heresy or defection in the Christian Church, *i. e.* every other Church, not Roman Catholic, is the true Church of Christ. There is a degree of liberality in this sentiment, but a greater of blind veneration for his own particular Establishment.—Idolatry, locking up the Scriptures from the common People, the assumption of Infallibility, Tyranny over the Consciences of men, Cruelty, a persecuting Spirit, Secularity, exterior Opulence and Grandeur are, it will be confessed, the characteristic marks of Antichrist: but will Dr. Hurd undertake to prove, with all his acuteness and critical Address, that these Marks in no degree apply to the Church of England, of which he is a peculiar ornament? He may undertake it, as a dutiful member of the Hierarchy, but in my judgment he can never fully make out his point. Her Creed, the Athanasian, the 11d and Vth of her Articles, make out, to my Idea, the full charge of Idolatry against her; her Book of Common Prayer, introduced into her Churches, and put into the hands of all of her Communion, in place of the Bible ITSELF, is, to my idea, tantamount to discountenancing the use of the Bible. Her virtual Claim of Infallibility, however ostentatiously she affects to disqualify herself in this particular, her XXth Article contains *in totidem verbis*. Her Tyranny over the Consciences of men, her Cruelty and persecuting Spirit, Secularity, exterior Opulence and Grandeur; all these the authentic History of her Church, her Tests, her Subscriptions, her enormous Revenues, Titles of Honour Armorial, her Clergy holding Civil Offices, and Laymen officiating and adjudging as Clergymen, prove to a demonstration.

If then Rome Papal, for the above alledged reasons, be truly and literally Antichrist: the Church of England *ipso facto*, for the same reasons, must be Antichrist also, though, I allow, *cum grana salis*, with a degree of temper and moderation unknown in the latitude of Rome. Thus too is verified, near the beginning of the NINETEENTH CENTURY, what the Apostle John declared and left upon record of the FIRST, *Even now there are many Antichrists*.—Whether the *temper and Moderation*, just now mentioned, as giving the Hierarchy of England

England a degree of merit above Rome, more owing to occasional CHECKS given her by the State, rather than to her OWN benign, gracious and self-denied Spirit, I leave the ingenious Dr. HURD ingenuously to determine. *Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.*

Alas! how applicable a considerable part of the xxiv Chapter of MATTHEW, to the law-giving, and suffer it to be added, gentle reader, the law-breaking Clergy of Established Churches? They have incorporated themselves, and daily swear to one another, to exemplify the *false Prophets* and *false Christs* mentioned so particularly by the TRUE Prophet, and the TRUE Christ: a singular method, you will doubtless say, of FULFILLING the Scripture, and perhaps, charitably taken, is only built upon St. Paul's memorable maxim of *becoming all things to all men*? I should be very much inclined to this candid construction, were I not compelled, by the all-commanding force of truth, from painful acquaintance with Ecclesiastical History, and from my own personal observation, to apply the following passages of Scripture, from among a number of others equally applicable, to the Clergy. Previous to this, a little parenthesis in the above Chapter, falls naturally under notice, as the writer's apology for the freedom of his remarks. WHOSO READETH (says St. Matthew) LET HIM UNDERSTAND. That is, every one who reads, or is capable of reading, may, and ought to understand, as well as judge for himself. This little puny appendage to the fifteenth Verse is, methinks, quite sufficient, like the ruddy stripling with his sling, opposed to the mighty Philistine, to overthrow the whole enormous fabric of Church Authority. It does not say, every Clergyman that readeth, let HIM understand, but *whoso*? every one, Laic, as well as Levite. Nor is PETER's styling the whole Christian Community a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, a stronger recognition of the LAYMAN's right to read, apprehend and explain his Bible, than this clause to the text. On this scriptural ground, however unordained by the Post-Apostolic *Holy Ghost* of Episcopal communication, may every Laic judge, not only of his own faith, but that of every Church, however dignified, around him.

By

By the Authority aforesaid, I adduce, and directly apply the Scriptures insuing to the Established Clergy of the English Church ; who instead of being the Servants of God and Disciples of Jesus Christ, by the only certain evidences of the relation, humility, self-denial, and abstractedness of ambition, with regard to the wealth and glory of this world ; are the professed and devoted servants of Lay Patrons, who unhappily have the means in their hands of tempting them, too successfully, from their virtue and purity of character ; the Disciples of inferior Masters, My Lords the Bishops, the municipal Governors of the Ecclesiastical Police ; as unlike Jesus Christ in the spirit of their minds, and the spirit of their Doctrines, as their gorgeous party-coloured Vestments are unlike his plain and seamless Coat. To such men how applicable one and all of these texts, many of them first addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, the learned Established Doctors and Rabbinical Teachers among the Jews ; but, as no Scripture is of private local interpretation, referable also to the Scribes and Pharisees of all ages and nations ! *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites ! for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men : that is, ye increase the number and difficulty of the Terms of admission there.* The Articles of the Church of England, her Creeds, Tests, Oaths and Subscriptions, clearly and explicitly exemplify this ; so clearly and explicitly, that it cannot possibly be mistaken but by those on whom the guilt fastens, in whom it is a wilful determined mistake. *Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.* This part of the Verse strikes home as forcibly as the other. The Clergy, by engrossing and securing to themselves so vast a proportion of the emoluments and distinctions of this world, have realized, in their own bosoms, so many *almost* unconquerable temptations to fall from Virtue and Holiness, have thrown so many *almost* impassable stumbling blocks and obstructions in their way towards Heaven : not only so, but by every method of exclusionary power, and coercive restraint, they adjudge others, free of those fatal seductive embarrassments, disabled and unpermitted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, except upon their *own terms ; i. e.* conforming to their Church, and thereby throwing themselves
into

into the very arms of one Temptation after another; temptations they themselves cannot in one instance withstand; temptations the most disqualifying of any, with respect to our entrance into Heaven, even in the hands of the wisest and best, the temptations of large appointments, revenues, and titles of honour.

The same striking sentiment is repeated and diversified in other parts of this Chapter †. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one Profelyte, vnd when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of Hell than yourselves.* The application here is too woefully plain! The Established Church would, by every alluring incentive, withdraw men from the simple obvious Religion of the Bible, and from *that Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, the glorious freedom of the Sons of God*; in order to come under ties and vassalage to herself; to bow our necks to the observance of cumbrous Rites, and insignificant Ceremonies, so far a truly *servum et mutum pecus*; and to give the ear of reverence and worship to her ARTIFICIAL INSPIRATION, her Canons, Articles, Homilies and Litanies; those traditory vehicles of knowledge, that *make the Commandments of God of none effect*.—Our SAVIOUR goes on in his highly descriptive Predictions of modern established Pastors and Teachers. *They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on Mens shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers, but all their works they do to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, (the variety, shew, and flowingness of modern Sacerdotal cloathing and inroberment, cannot be overlooked in this description,) and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and chief seats in the synagogues: and greetings in the market-places, and to be called of men, Rabbi! Rabbi!* The established order of Precedence among our Clergy, from an Archbishop down—down to an humble Clerk or Curate; their taking the lead or place of each other on public occasions; their crowding into all the popular places of brilliant resort, demanding their respective titles, distinctions, and reverences; their affecting and occupying the
seats

† Matt. xxiii. Passim.

seats of nobles, senators, and judges ; their exterior magnificence and parade, princely sideboards and voluptuous tables ; their liveries, retinues, crests and armorial bearings ; their dignitary right, as Visitors and Examiners of Colleges and Seminaries of learning, licensing schoolmasters, practitioners in physic, &c. &c. all these, and more than these, are not less *Exempli Gratias* and *Ecce Signums* of the Text, than they are truly characteristic of our Established Clergy. *Whoso readeth*, says St. Matthew, *let him understand* : but what says a higher authority still, our Saviour himself ? *Do not ye after their works ? for they say and do not †. Be not ye called Rubbi ! for one is your Master even Christ, and all ye are Brethren : and call no Man your Father upon the Earth ; for one is your Father, which is in Heaven.* But how does the Episcopal demand of Right Reverend FATHER in God, consort with this plain and positive command, unless by the addition—in God, they mean to have it understood, that they are indeed consubstantial with their HEAVENLY FATHER ; if so, how poor is the introductory epithet, RIGHT REVEREND !

Neither be ye called Masters (continues our DIVINE MASTER) *for one is your master, even Christ : but be that is greatest among you, shall be your Servant.* Now, in the highest style of Pretension, MY LORDS THE BISHOPS, are our Masters. We must swear to them, we must subscribe to them : we must think, speak, write—as they are pleased to think, speak, write—otherwise we will offend them ; and to offend them within the environs of the Church, is the same thing as to be deprived of the meat and drink of the Church. Ordination flows from them as our Masters—Institution—Pastoral Jurisdiction—Confirmation—Triennial Visitation—Plurality of Livings—Non-residence—Sinecures.—In short, every thing flows from them but—a trifling but—a single exception to a common rule—but the HOLY GHOST.—Even to this they lay immemorial Ancestrel claim ; altho' it can only be *such an Holy Ghost* as SIMON MAGUS the Sorcerer would have bought for money, and would have sold again to the highest bidder : or *such an Holy Ghost* as they

† Matt. xxiii. v. 2.

they have stuck up, alphabetically accoutred, in their Litany as GOD, the SUPREME Hearer of prayer, distinct from the ALMIGHTY FATHER. — They, as Spiritual Masters, can as easily MAKE a God, as Taylors, tippits, rochets and lawn sleeves for them, or Limners the armorial quarterings of their coaches. — How awfully, how tremendously should the following Scripture Passages, immediately and personally addressed to them, sound in their Reverend, Right Reverend, and Most Reverend Ears! *Wo unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation!* Let it be remarked here, at the close of so solemn a denunciation of wo, to take away all difficulty of application, that RICHES applied to a Church, or spiritual aggregate Body, form, with respect to the Kingdom of Heaven, as truly a Scriptural disqualification, as when applied to Individuals. The divine message to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans sets this before us in very striking representation. *Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* That is, I will cut thee off from my Church Universal, as useless and unprofitable; I will root and cast thee out of my vineyard, as a *barren fig-tree*, and as a *cumberer of the ground*, *Because thou sayest, I AM RICH AND INCREASED WITH GOODS, AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

It might look perhaps too like ungenerous insult offered to a self-condemned Criminal, to draw out the lines of comparison here to full length. I shall therefore forbear, with just observing, in general, that I know of no Church upon Earth, at this present time, for which the above remarkable caricature should seem to be drawn, if not the Church of England. The Church of Rome cannot be said to be *neither hot nor cold*: nor can the Church of Scotland be pronounced *rich and increased with goods*. It may likewise be properly added here, that Christ's Church, according to the primary Scriptural idea, is to be considered, in this world, as a militant, unendowed, scattered, afflicted, and despised Church; agreeable to our Lord's expression. *THE KINGDOM OF GOD cometh not with observation*: to which succeed these ever memorable words, *Behold, the Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU.*

YOU. That is, his Kingdom, except by its fruits, *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, is always invisible. The Church, therefore, that lives *at her ease*, reposing on the silken couch of indolence, basking in the cloudless sunshine of Prosperity, sitting like a queen, and saying, I shall see no sorrow ; drinking to indulgence at the golden cup of Pleasure, and lending her eye and ear to the melody of the lute, and festivity of the dance : such a Church methinks is too courtly, too elegant, too fashionable, too debonaire, too dainty, too phantastic, and too like what

“Recumbent Virtue’s downy doctors preach,”

to deserve the name of CHRIST’s venerable and holy Church, which essentially consists in a constant, silent, and retired, but noble and manly struggle to subdue our Appetites and Passions ; to keep, as much as possible, aloof from the world, unless when called into its snares and temptations by Duty or Business, and never wholly to avert the eye of the Soul from *another and better World*.—But to proceed, in the language of Scripture, against all exhibitory, vain-glorious boast, all exclusionary spirit, all assumptions of authority, all *Lording it over the Heritage of God*.

Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger ! Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall weep and mourn ! Ye are they which justify yourselves before men ; but God knoweth your hearts. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ! Again, I say unto you (it being a matter of such singular moment as to require reiterated declarations) it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man (a rich Church—they are synonymous) to enter into the Kingdom of God. Take heed and beware of covetousness ; for a man (a Church’s) life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he (she) possesseth. Sell all that ye have (a hard sentence respecting the Church, which hath annual millions by investiture in her possession !) and give alms ; provide yourselves bags which wax not old ; a treasure in the Heavens which faileth not ; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth : for where your
treasure

treasure is, there will your heart be also. A reason lamentably true, why the Church's affections gravitate towards this world; reluctant to look upward, on the wings of divine hope and expectation, because her treasure is *not* there; her Bishoprics, her Archdeaconries, her Deaneries, her Prebendaries, her Chancellorships, Rectorial, Vicarial Livings, &c. — *Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*—*No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will hold to the one, and despise the other: you cannot serve God and Mammon.*

Let our Prelates, our learned Doctors of the Church explain this last renowned Text, in behalf of themselves, if they can. They affect to serve two Masters, in matters wholly spiritual and divine, Jesus Christ, and the Supreme Civil Magistrate, for the time being. In matters purely Religious, in which the Conscience is only concerned, they submit themselves to be directed and controuled, with even the BIBLE in their hands, by the King alone; a secular municipal Governor, who has no more right to superintend private personal Christian Belief, than a Minister of the Gospel has a right to superintend the Monarch's Councils and his Parliaments. But the King has Church dignities and emoluments to bestow. *Rem acu tetigisti.* What then? Our Saviour's declaration stands irrefragably good notwithstanding; like a mighty and majestic oak, that will not bend under the importance of a velvet-winged butterfly perched upon its branches. NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. The Church has ten thousand times acknowledged the King as her MASTER, her HEAD, her LEGISLATOR, her FOUNTAIN of honour and remuneration, in Ecclesiastical Affairs of course, as sure as the words of IMMUTABLE TRUTH are true, *Jesus Christ* is NOT her Master, her Head, her Legislator, her Fountain of honour and remuneration. What is she then, the Church, the Protestant Church, the Reformed Church, the Most Excellent Church in Christendom, the admired Church of England; what is she better than SIMON MAGUS, who had neither *lot nor part in this matter*?—Sacerdotal Ingenuity may perhaps find out a difference; I pretend not to be so ingenious.—How solemnly pointed then our Saviour's

our's declaration, to such dignitary, endowed Establishments! *Verily I say unto you, many shall come from the East, and from the West, from the North and from the South, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the Children of the Kingdom (those who gregariously and boastingly style themselves such) shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* On the other hand, how gracious, how consolatory his promise to all Christians without limitation (if we only except one, *in his Name!*) *wherever two or three are met together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them to bless them.*—Dear and amiable Lord! we have but to turn our backs on the guilty pleasures and dangerous temptations of this world, which absolutely end in ruin and disgrace, to be accepted by thee, to be rewarded by thee: accepted and rewarded for flying from our own destruction!

I might fill a folio, larger than ever was filled with Polemics, did I mention half the great and glorious things the Church of England has said *of herself*. No affected phraseology, no strain of encomium, has been deemed too high, in the mouths of her Doctors, on all occasions; that is, her Doctors, *pleno et rotundo ore, praising themselves.* *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings will I perfect praise.* But this is divine praise, the holy praise of innocent simplicity.—The praise of our Doctors, is but the pickle-herring's self-reverted praise, upon contemplating his party-coloured jerken; or that of the mountebank his master, upon seeing the eager and gaping multitude around him, verifying the truth of his motto, *Si Populus decipi vult, decipiatur.*

An incorporate, self-created Church, lavishing extravagant adulation on herself, is no better in the eye of Philosophy and Reason, than the conceited and vaunting Pharisee. *Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, or even as this Publican.* The parody might run thus: *Lord, I thank that I am not as other Churches are, or even as this—CONFSSIONALIST.* *I tell you that this man (this Church) went down to his (her) house, justified rather than the other.* This man: what man? the undissembling self-debased Publican who, *standing afar off,*

*off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven, but smiting on his breast, exclaimed—*GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER. Had the Episcopal Church been smitten at her breast, like the justified, but unassuming Publican, she never would have dared to dictate to Christians, made FREE by the blood of Christ, and purchased as his own Heritage, by the authoritative medium of a Creed, a Canon, or an article; all of which most presumptuously, though unavowedly imply, that the SCRIPTURES are imperfect and insufficient for the purposes meant to be affected by them, and unaccommodated to the various situations and emergencies of the Christian Church: in other words, that the Bible was wisely and divinely calculated to answer the times and the seasons, men and manners, for the two or three first Centuries; but that, latterly, such wonderful changes and revolutions have happened (unforeseen, to be sure, by Omniscience itself) such variations in national customs, prejudices, habitudes and characters, that another and more accurate Revelation became absolutely necessary; and therefore, to save Almighty God the trouble and expensum of thought, requisite to establish Christianity in this her renovated, meliorated form, and to prevent the complicated instrumentality of Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles; but above all (for which consummate discretion and tenderness of heart, Heaven and Earth will eternally thank them) to supersede the expediency of Jesus Christ DYING A SECOND TIME, on the mangling and ignominious Cross, to feast the eyes of scoffing Jews and idolatrous Heathens: on all these self-evident accounts, I repeat it, which, but for modesty's sake, might be amply enlarged, our *locum tenentes* of Almighty God, our Bishops, Doctors, and Deans, in their overflowings of compassion to mankind, and that the Legislative Majesty of Divine Inspiration might not be brought into contempt among the nations, in Convocation assembled, by and with the consent of the King's Most Excellent Grace, conceived, digested, decreed, and enacted, the MODERN HOLY BIBLE; consisting, *inter alia memorabilia*, of Canons, Articles, Rites, Ceremonies, Litanies, Homilies, Rubrics, &c. and appointed them *speciali gratia*, and by the authority aforesaid, to be read in CHURCHES.

It is very remarkable, that we are told our Saviour *spake this Parable* (of the Pharisee and Publican) unto CERTAIN, *which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.* The Stricture certainly applies to a Body talking fastidiously of itself, as well as to an Individual, *propria persona.* The ascription of desert, in both cases, arises from the vain complacency, the over-rated consciousness of what both respectively have done, by themselves, and of themselves. It is always reckoned a breach of elegant decorum for a man to commend and adulate himself on account of what he has acted or said. Far more. It is, in general, a never-failing criterion of judgment to pronounce such a person a satirist on his own pretensions, and the affirmative estimate he has made, when properly construed, to be the downright negative of himself. The decision stands upon the most accurate basis. A truly worthy man, when he says or does what others, below his style of excellence, are apt to denominate wonderfully great and good, is never struck with the feminine officiousness of self-flattery; because, his inward apprehension of the noble, virtuous, and sublime, being incomparably beyond every thing he can put into language or act, what he says, or does, strikes him only in the cool moderate light of moral duty half performed: the consequence of which is invincible, unaffected silence in self-praise; nay such an habitual, but truly amiable sense of disqualification, as averts the step, and throws down the eye, even at the modest mention of his own praise by another. The stream that is stopt by nothing but pebbles, how noisy and babbling it flows! but the deep and majestic river, that has its own weight and depth of waters to support it, but above all, has a body before it with which it is to the bottom continuous, mightier than itself, the Ocean; how silently and smoothly it advances, moving constantly and regularly, without appearing to move!

I am astonished the odd oversight has never struck ingenious, liberal-minded men, numbers of whom have at different periods adorned the English Hierarchy, that a Church modelled and fashioned by her own hands, keeping together from falling by her own ingenuity and address,

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and undeniably calculated for present use and temporal accommodation ; should never have supposed herself, in her repeated jaſtations of vanity and boasting, within the reach of thoſe Scriptures, that with ſo much energy ſtigmatize PRIDE, and denounce its variety of puniſhment. From among a multitude I would ſelect theſe few, but altogether keen paſſages. *Talk not ſo exceeding proudly ; let not arrogancy come out of thy mouth : for God is a God of Knowledge, by him actions are weighed. Who is this that darkeneth counſel by words without knowledge ?* This interrogation ſtrikes at the very root of the Viſible Church, pretending to ſit as Judge in matters of Faith ; but at what happy criſis of humility, what generous moment of ſelf-debaſement, has ſhe condeſcended to answer in the honeſt and manly words of Job ? *Therefore have I uttered that I underſtood not ; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.* And therefore may any indifferent perſon ſay, that the Church, extolling herſelf in ſuch proud and lofty language, ſhould peculiarly feel the force of the two following Texts. *God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Whoſoever exalteth himſelf (whatſoever Church exalteth herſelf) ſhall be debaſed ; and he that ſhall humble himſelf (the Church that ſhall humble herſelf) ſhall be exalted.*

In conſequence of ſuch extreme beggarly pride, ſuch a ſpirit of monopoly (unworthy of a Pagan Idolater, not to mention the ſacred and venerable term Chriſtian) the Church would confine the Goſpel of Chriſt, the Kingdom of God, the boundleſſneſs of Divine Clemency, to the inſular impoundment of Britain : then, to this local and imprifoned Model, laid up in her Creeds and Articles (like Egyptian Mummies of high preſervation in the *Muſeum*, leſt they might moulder and decay) the VERY work of her own hands, would ſhe offer up cenſors flaming with the incenſe of ſelf-flattery ?—that is, in other words, (words cannot be too ſtrong to paint the enormity in proper colouring) ſhe would clothe herſelf in all the gorgeous array, all the ſplendid regalia of arrogant EGOTISM, of hyperbolical Panegyric ; offer more than barbarian violence to the TEMPLE of MERIT, break open its portals of porphyre, and hinges of maſſy gold ; advance to the hallowed throne of elevation, ſeat herſelf
down

down there, in affected majesty, and call upon the wide world, in the most confident style of investiture, to fall down and worship her.

To acknowledge her Authority in Controversies of Faith (a big technical word for all spiritual matters whatsoever) were actually to acknowledge her Infallibility; next, her Supremacy; and last of all, her actual DIVINITY, as the object of our humble worship: to be infallible, is to be divine; to be supreme, is to be divine. The Climax begins in the narrow and dark windings of a snail's shell, the recesses of a mole-hill; and then, mounting the steep of Heaven, darkening the moon's orbit, and scaling the battlements of the Empyrean, would, mantled in INACCESSIBLE LIGHT, take possession of HIS throne.—She affects indeed to qualify this indefinite claim of Authority, by a futile recurrence to the unlawfulness of ordaining any thing contrary to God's *written word*. But who is to judge ultimately of this unlawfulness? Herself, *in foro Ecclesiæ*. This limitation then of her Authority, only strengthens, by diversifying it, with the superadded mortification on our part, and indignity on that of the Scriptures, of being mocked and insulted. So that, after all, the Church of England is, how small soever within the natural boundaries of her cliffs and her channels, the *magnum totum* of Christianity: *multum in parvo*, with a witness; *in se totum teres atque rotundus*. But she is such an epitome of Christianity, as a speculum is of the Sun, in which a few of its rays converge to a point; and what is very observable, it keeps up the strictness of the Analogy, by *changing* the usual benign temperament of these rays, *i. e.* causing them to *burn*, and to *destroy*.

In consequence of the above unbounded claim, she has positively fixt the TERMS OF SALVATION, and confined IT to herself and her members, a few (in comparison of mankind a very few) ostentatious worshippers, held together in humble obeisance to the State, by annual Pensions and Salaries. Confined what? The Placability of the Supreme Being; his truth; goodness; his loving kindness; his sovereign right of forgiving sins, and pardoning guilt; his pity; his long-suffering, and tender

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mercies,

mercies, *which are over all his works*: who loveth every thing he hath made, as a Father loveth his own, especially all Mankind, made in his own image and likeness. And above all, *who so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. Who so believeth on him—believeth the authenticity of his Commission, as the Son of God, the truth of the Doctrines he came to deliver, viz. supreme love to God, and brotherly love to one another; on the sincere and earnest endeavour to perform which, all moral virtue and obligation depend. These are our only terms of Acceptance with God, our Maker and Father, a summary of the Gospel requisition: a few emphatic terms indeed, but they take in the whole wide world, as well as, by implication, the whole wide circle of Duty: whereas the Church's terms of Acceptance and Salvation, though labouring with verbosity, and wire-drawn to monotonous circumlocution, would take in but a paltry impoverished number of that world, and such *only* as have got the mark of the Hierarchy on their foreheads.

The Hierarchy, as niggardly in her spirit, as overflowing in her coffers, has not been ashamed to engross the *whole tythes of mint, anise, and cummin, (the weightier matters of the Law, let those idle persons observe that have not these to gather)* has industriously realised a profusion of the world's honours, distinctions, sinecures, and preferments, without even the rubicundity of a burning check: and to make amends to the Christian Brotherhood at large for the appropriation (which has much such an appearance, as if a *few* of the vast multitude, whom our Blessed Lord fed, unrespectingly, with the loaves and fishes, had snatched them out of his graciously distributing hands, and regaled themselves only, and a few choice favourites, in a corner) to make amends, I say, for such a monopoly, what does she do? why, she casts a lustful, covetous eye towards Heaven also; would sweep into her enormous Treasury, even to *the Widow's Mite*, all the blessings, comforts, rewards, pleasures, peace, and everlasting rest, of that blessed and glorious place. She would not only rid us of all Earth's enjoyments

ments and possessions, but of the enjoyments and possessions of Heaven likewise !

Wo be to the SHEPHERDS of Israel, that do feed themselves ! Should not the Shepherds feed the Flocks ? You eat the fat and ye clothe you with the wool ; ye kill them that are fat ; but ye feed not the Flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened ; neither have ye healed that which was sick ; neither have ye bound up that which was broken ; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away ; neither have ye sought that which was lost ; BUT WITH FORCE AND WITH CRUELTY HAVE YE RULED THEM. The Prophet, under the inspiration of God, darted his perçant eye far into futurity, and far into the ISLES of the seas, when he penned these beautiful and affecting words ; keen also as the edge of the cymeter, and sharp as the Parthian dart ! It is impossible they can be read by noble and generous BRITONS, who think deeply, without references *some where*, without direct applications *some where else*, that will and must leave many a surplice miserably rent ; many a rocket stained, and many a lawn sleeve ruffled. How awakening and terrible also is Almighty God's Address by his Prophet, to the Shepherds of Israel ? — of BRITAIN, had almost dropt upon my paper ! — *Therefore, ye Shepherds, hear the word of the Lord, As I live, saith the Lord God, because the Shepherds fed themselves and fed not my flock ; behold, I am against the Shepherds ; I WILL REQUIRE MY FLOCK AT THEIR HANDS, and make them to CEASE from feeding my Flock ; neither shall the Shepherds feed THEMSELVES any more †.*

Human Shepherds of human Flocks, it is quite apparent, were the same, *mutatis mutandis*, four thousand some hundred years ago that we find them at this late period of the world. It is no wonder, therefore, that a righteous and good God, in fatherly pity to his Children of mankind, should have made them to cease from feeding his Flock. Nor can it be conceived, with any congruity with *that faithfulness of his which never faileth*, those tender mercies which are over all his works, that he intended, or would authorize the Establishment of another

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set of Shepherds, having it equally in their power, *with force and with cruelty to rule the Flock*: the very reason *this*, over and over again specified, insisted on, his *very* motive, for terminating the superintendency of the Shepherds of Israel, and destroying their authority; which was effectually done by the destruction of the Temple, and dispersion of the Jewish State. At this time he vouchsafed to commence *the Shepherd of the Flock* (all mankind) himself, in the person of Jesus Christ; who came expressly, *to seek and to save them that were lost*, and to set every one free from burdens and yokes of bondage grievous to be borne, and which our Forefathers were not able to bear. To this general purport of Christ's Commission, we have the following happy and endearing Appendage, that whom the Son hath made *free, they are free* INDEED. To which the Apostle James finely alludes. *Whofo looketh into the perfect law of LIBERTY, that man shall be blessed in his deed* †. That is, he that venerates, exemplifies this perfect law of Liberty, respecting equally his neighbour with himself, averse to all encroachment, all exclusive privileges; him will God, the faithful and equitable God, take under his peculiar protection, and make the object of his immediate blessings.

Isaiah also, by commission from God, has expressed his indignation at the Jewish Hierarchy and Priesthood, in such pointed, distinctive Terms, as cannot fail of exact application to a modern Hierarchy and Priesthood, who have in their Calendar such a multiplication of senseless Fasts, unmeaning Saint-days and Holy-days. *Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, TO MAKE YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD ON HIGH. Is it such a fast AS I HAVE CHOSEN? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush; and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Is not THIS the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness; TO UNDO THE HEAVY BURDENS, AND TO LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE, AND THAT YE BREAK EVERY YOKE? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? Is it not*
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† St. James. Chap. 1. Ver. 5.

*when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh *.*

This Prophet's language and imagery are as beautifully simple and captivating, as the sentiments and affections of the soul and heart he would inculcate, are divine. Whoever without favour or prejudice, will view the constitution and practice of the ANGELICAN CHURCH, at this day, with regard to her Holy Days and Festivals, not excluding even that most venerable one of all, CHRISTMAS; will see an aptitude, a minuteness of resemblance, between her and the Jewish Church, at the time of the above Prophecy, which cannot but penetrate beyond the surface of mitres and senatorial robes! What are they, one and all of them, but pompous, ostentatious *will and peace offerings*, quite of the nature of those among the Jews long since reprobated and abolished? what are they but *doing evil that good may come*? Positive evil, that cannot be covered with the mantle of apology, cannot be denied by the boldest front of Sacerdotal Superstition?—What are they but Cities and Villages set adrift from honest labour and industry, to saunter about in perfect idleness, and to spend in the riotous eating and drinking of *one day*, what should serve themselves, their wives and children, for a month: for the very nature and practice of modern FASTING is to eat and drink in greater abundance?—Their going to Church dressed with uncommon show and airiness, and there muttering over, for a listless hour or two, certain forms and doxologies, which seldom or never go farther than mere labial articulation, seldom or never (God knows!) affect or penetrate the heart, or are even happily calculated to do so; notwithstanding it ought to be the whole amount of Public Religious Devotion; I repeat it, cities and villages committing this trespass upon their time, this unaccountable deception upon themselves, will never sanctify the deed, or please that BEING who ought never to be worshipped but *in spirit and in truth*! Besides, it is manifestly counteracting our Saviour's command, who (gracious and divine Master!) would seem to have come into the world only to prove his perfect meekness and patience,

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* Isaiah cviii. *Passim*.

under the grossest insult and contradiction! For instance. *Thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men: but thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy CLOSET, and when thou hast SHUT thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. When you pray use not VAIN REPETITIONS, as the Heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their MUCH SPEAKING. Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the HYPOCRITES, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy feet (assume nothing beyond habitual, ordinary appearances, usual cleanliness, and unaffected sanctity) that thou APPEAR NOT UNTO MEN TO FAST, but unto thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.* These words of our common Lord and Master, in my apprehension, amount to a positive prohibition of ALL Public Fasting and Holy-day-worship: for surely, the ordinance and appointed Service for Public-fasting, not only realizes the fact of *being seen of men*, but also our *ambition and desire to be seen of men*.

The Founders and Governors of the Church, cannot come off by this exculpatory plea—the *design and prospect* of affecting valuable ends; as the plea justly fastens the imputation of ignorance upon them, unworthy the Founders and Governors of any Church; ignorance of nations and Human Nature, always too much disposed to abuse and prostitute such exhibitory observances. It is binding burdens and fastening yokes upon us, under which we are impatient, and out of our element, at the time; I mean, during the course of public Service, and from which we find ourselves so much elated to get free, that we run into the opposite extreme, the inordinate extreme of Liberty. But why throw stumbling blocks in our way, merely from the expectation of our showing agility and address in jumping over them? Instead of this, alas! we are oftener caught by the foot, and fall prostrate in mire and dirt. Why encrease the danger, nay, the necessity of falling? why add to the volume of our duties,
not

not one in two of which, without the addition, we are ambitious or trouble ourselves to fulfil? Is it to enlarge our diary of transgressions, and render four-fold, instead of two-fold, the instances of our moral delinquency? Is it to superadd colouring to crimson? Is it to shut the door of mercy upon the *number* and *variety* of our offences, that might have been graciously open to those *less* numerous and *less* diversified? Is it to tie mill-stones about our devoted necks, that we may have no chance *not* to sink into the bottomless-pit?—These, and such like questions, our worthy Divines must answer to the entire satisfaction of every sensible, intelligent Christian; otherwise, a mere Royal Declaration, a Parliamentary Statute, will be altogether insufficient to render their intentions honourable or honest, much more to stop the course of equitable enquiry in ANOTHER WORLD.—Moreover,

All Holy-days and Saint-days retrench or new-model an original command of our Maker, which no Human Authority can possibly do, without being efficient, at the same time, totally to abrogate the command. *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the Seventh is the Lord thy God's.* Now, the Church hath the same right precisely to devote the *seventh day* to worldly secular purposes, as she has to decree any one of *the remaining six*, to what she calls religious ends, but what I would call, from matter of fact and constant observation, merely popular, superstitious ends; whereby, under the false persuasion of having performed a public duty, *the duty of the day*, we go home and relax in proportion to the restraint we brought ourselves under: like a well-tempered piece of wood, which recovers, by an act of its own elasticity, what it had lost by being forcibly bent against the grain.

Here then we have human commands operating supplementary to a divine command: *this* positively enjoins sixty-five Holy-days, in the year; *those* as positively enjoin a score or two more, during the same period: farther, the Church classes Sunday only with other Holy-days, in these words, “Proper Lessons to be read at morning and evening Prayer on the Sundays, and OTHER Holy-days throughout

throughout the year *". Therefore, the Authority of man comes into competition with the Authority of God: but *whether we ought to obey* God or man, can never come into competition: consequently, the same sovereign precept that binds us to the observance of Sunday, as the great Creational Holy-day, forbids us absolutely to observe any other; and the same disposition of religious duty that inclines us to the one, ought to withdraw, in every instance, our attention and reverence from the other.

Our Church Lawgivers can never make use of the following consideration, as a retreat from difficulty, as the means of cutting that knot they cannot untie; *i. e.* notwithstanding their own declaration above mentioned, they upon no account would have *their* Holy-days understood, as being equally sacred and venerable with SUNDAY. But surely, if they would make a distinction, it will turn out a distinction without a difference. Upon the one as well as the other Holy-day, their people go to Church, perform Public Service, and repeat audible Lessons, in which the most holy name of God is solemnly introduced, and his invisible Majesty addressed in prayer. If the occasional object which takes them there, be not equal, how comes it they extravagantly suppose, that the interference and blessing of God could possibly be interested? or that he would vouchsafe his glorious and unseen Presence, where the Honour and Recollection of a CREATURE, even by name, brought the Assembly together with adoration on their lips, at least, if not in their hearts? The plea of words, and the sophistry of idle distinctions, will no more bring them honourably off on this occasion, than Roman Catholics, when they would vindicate the use of Images and Pictures in Churches. Our spiritual Law-makers, in this instance, to latinize a vulgar proverb, fall *ex fumo in flammam*. Nor am I backward to pronounce it as my opinion, that it should seem vastly more consistent and decorous, to use a well-executed Bust, a striking piece of painting, as helps, incitements, stirrers-up, emulation-rousers, remembrancers, &c. than Saints and Worthies, only
existing

* See that part of the Prayer-Book, immediately after the Calendar.

existing by the breath of human testimony, and only living in the imperfect enrolments of Fame's tale-telling Temple. While they actually existed, *in propriis personibus*, we doubtless should not even have ventured to mention their names in the immediate Sanctuary of God, unless as we mention the *Pauper*, when he languishes on a sick-bed, to recommend him in our humble prayers to divine compassion: shall we then, when they are dead and gone, when they are—with the years beyond the flood, summon them to reviviscence! identify them, as it were, by a new creation, at the altar of our God! that God who had called them to himself a thousand years ago!—Were they indeed, like Samuel's ghost, to rise out of the earth, in all the peculiar drapery of the dead, at the repetition of those LESSONS to which their names are affixed, what should they do? they should severally stop the accents quavering on our lips; and, while a general thrill of mute horror seized the Assembly, should repeat the apocalyptic words of the Angel to St. John. *See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy Brethren that have the testimony of Jesus*—WORSHIP GOD.

What is MEMORY, respecting the dead? Assuredly and without a peradventure, a thing of our *own* creating, our *own* consecrating, and, last of all, idolizing: a thing that grows and vegetates from one generation to another, without root, and often without sunshine. At home then, as one of the most valuable deposits of our domestic Museum; let us examine this curiosity, let us expatiate on it, let us venerate it; nay, let us even idolize it—but never venture to bring it, in a state when it cannot signify its own consent or approbation, into the Temple of God: there it ought NOT to come, upon any pretence whatsoever—being too, too like what we OURSELVES wish and ambition to be, after we die, to enter THERE.—Upon the whole, the Church's dilemma seems unavoidable, both from the force of argument, and the energy of human feeling, either authoritatively to pronounce *her* Holy-days equally sacred, equally of divine institution with Sunday; or lie under the weight of stated, periodical IDOLATRY: not the most grievous species of it, we allow, she commits; yet quite sufficient to cover her with ashes, and, instead of silk, velvet and lawn, to clothe

clothe her loins in sack-cloth. — The alternative is left to that wisdom of her's (astonishing indeed) which would RE-inspire the Scriptures, and RE-reveal the will of God.

Had we now an EZEKIEL, or an ISAIAH, those Prophetic thunderers of antient times against the Shepherds of Israel, *our's* of BRITAIN should not repose themselves in a state so feebly recumbent in the midst of their flocks; whose *fat they eat*, and whose *wool they clothe themselves in*, but *do not feed them*. The divine mandate to those renowned Seers was. *Son of man, prophesy against the Shepherds of Israel: cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet*. The Shepherds of Israel, it would appear, were not less dull and obtuse of hearing, than the Shepherds of our *own* Israel. Indeed, Shepherds canonical, in general, have less the alacrity of hearing, than of speaking. Whether their auditory apparatus be, by nature, less perfect, than their lingual; or whether the surprising power of Habit, which through all the world has been accounted a second nature, has *rendered* the one more so than the other, I shall not presume to determine. However, as it is a matter of not incurious speculation, and in its *modus operandi*, purely Clerical, I *almost* wish an œcumenical Council could be summoned, softly and quietly, to give dignity and weight to the enquiry; provided that the Phenomenon, when brought before the black tribunal, should not defeat itself—silence by noise the disquisition into its own nature. In bar of this not impossible event, it might be settled a preliminary rule, that while one Reverend Member spoke, another should listen, and so upwards, by exact proportion, should even a hundred speak at a time. Were we happy enough to have a CONSTANTINE now alive upon Earth, he from the throne of Infallibility might determine the difficulty at once. It is a pity such men were not indulged with the egregious privilege of immortalizing their flesh and bones, as well as a Creed or a Confession. But let this remain as our Maker intended it, no doubt for most excellent ends, the subject of enquiry still lays upon hand, why *the Sons of Levi*, in all ages, have had a thousand tongues, for one ear; I mean recipient, retentive ears; for as to external conformation and fixture, they would appear to be like those of other men.

men. *Causa latet, vis est notissima.* Some recent Instances of this *surditas incomprehensibilis*, are not less surprising to all, than notorious to all.

In proof of this ecclesiastical surdity, this attribute of the adder, affected by our Clergy, it may be observed, that for a Century past, many, even in the bosom of the Church, have silently sighed and moaned, many whispered; many ventured openly to express their discontents and dissatisfactions, respecting several of the *Assumpta* and *Credenda* of the Hierarchy. How could it be otherwise? Numbers of them are the grossest impositions on our Nature, the poorest jargon of the Schools, as unhappily expressed as obscurely conceived; the most palpable perversions of the sacred Text, immediately adopted from the Source of every abomination, every corruption—ROME PAPAL; who herself derived them from the impurest of all fountains, rude and barbarous Paganism. Some of these have already been animadverted upon, with no more blunt freedom and acuated severity than they irresistibly give occasion to: others, and if possible all of them, shall pass through the same hands, without respite or pardon; which they little deserve from those they would jurisdictionally incapacitate, both as Men and as Christians, from entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Man whose reasoning Powers are put under an interdict, is worse used infinitely, more ingloriously treated, than he who has had fetters clapt on his legs, or hand-cuffs on his wrists, without either law or justice. This the writer advances as a Subject of Christ's Government at large, who acknowledges no authority whatever but his BIBLE, interpreted by himself, and for himself; his Charter of freedom, his Charter of right, his MAGNA CHARTA of divine and untransferable Privileges. The Clerical Robber that would, without even blackening his face with the modesty of a highwayman, with one hand, snatch this glorious treasure from me, in order to make his own vile use of it, might, presenting his pistol with the other, blow out my brains, and commit a far less crime. In the one case I should, haply, only a few years sooner, in consequence of his generous act
of

of bravery, be disengaged from a tenement, which of course, and of itself would fall in ruins about me (perhaps very soon) to gain that blessed place, *where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thief breaketh through to steal*, with my signatures of Immortality about me ; on account of which I should not only be instantly recognized by fellow-men, who had got there before me, but by angels themselves : in the other, I might indeed prolong my earthly existence for an addition of a few ignoble, wretched years, till the snow, without the venerable gracefulness of Age, had marked my unhonoured scalp, like actual snow on a desert barren mountain ; or till the paralytic shake of senectitude had seized every part of me, but my HEART, which had long ago, upon signing a Protest against the Bible, a base-born CREED, been rendered incapable of *trembling* : what then ? even supposing the negative of life prolonged being only prolonged misery, at the crisis of its dissolution (for some time or other I must die) how should I enter the world of spirits, how should I appear before the Children of light, Saints, Martyrs, and angelic multitudes, not to mention my God and my Judge, without the dignified and characteristic badge of SPIRIT along with me, my Reason, the seal of Divinity, brighter than the glitter of the brightest star, in my forehead ? Those glorious lucific Beings might indeed remark, and point at me ; but it only should be as they remark, and point at a planet, thrown into shadow by themselves passing by !

That the Persons, just now mentioned, continued till their latest hour, to give strong tokens of discontent and dissatisfaction, is not at all surprising, when it is considered that Men and Christians may, at an unwary moment, *consent* to yield up their Reason to another, but in truth and reality *cannot* do it : that is, they may as well cease to breathe, as cease to think ; the one is the necessary consequence of our Bodies formed in a particular way ; the other, the necessary consequence of our Souls constituted in a particular way. Who can cease from breathing when he pleases, without an act of violence upon himself, without suicide ! who can cease from thinking, when he pleases, or when another pleases,

without

without an act of violence upon his own mind, tantamount to the guilt of self-destruction? who can transfer his powers of breathing to another? or who can breathe by proxy or by a substitute?—A certain Right Reverend Prelate indeed, once upon a time, called the monarch then reigning, James I. *THE BREATH OF OUR NOSTRILS*; but that interested hypocritical Churchman, Neale Bishop of Durham, breathed a century and an half ago; and since *that*, the spirit of his Faction hath breathed everlastingly its last.—When our first malecontents, under the iron sceptre of Hierachic dominion went off the stage, had the fair hand of Truth ingraven on their tomb-stones, one expressive Epitaph for them all, no words could have answered so well as these of Inspiration. *WHO HATH BELIEVED OUR REPORT?* In fact their murmurs, their mutterings, their sighings, their groanings were heard—like the swellings and buffetings of the ocean by the bleak and insensible rock. But the similitude holds good in a sense ungracious and mortifying enough, as much so as heart can wish, to our quiescent sons of State Christianity: these swellings and these buffetings will, in process of time, wear away the rock itself, that so long senselessly resisted them, to be overwhelmed in that very Element above which it once immoveably towered; or else be left a hollowed hiatus for the winds to pass through, or only for stagnating waters to settle and sleep in.

The private domestic uneasinesses of these men, standing with one finger on Reformation, while all the rest of them, a dead weight, rested upon the *terra firma* of Establishment (like compasses at the extremities of our maps, pointing to *lands unknown*) did not become public and formidable enough to rouse the ecclesiastical tyger slumbering in his den; glutted with prey, and dormant from satiety. No; they passed through life, within themselves fond of light, but without, too much familiarized to darkness; like a shooting star through a clouded and troubled atmosphere. They were just seen, and vanished: the eye beheld, but did not retain them. Posterior to them, however, when five other Personages appeared, struck as they were, but more forcibly and more permanently, Chillingworth, Whiston, Clarke,

Clarke, Hoadly, Clayton, they could not possibly be overlooked, nay, not particularly attended to: they arose like comets in the same cloudy, troubled atmosphere, astonishing and overawing mankind, in their bright and rapid advance towards the sun: and to be sure, immediately excited ideas of terror and apprehension, of wars, rumours of wars, revolutions, desolations, massacres, and death. And how could our *gubernatores Ecclesiae*, our *Watchmen of Israel*, but especially, our *Shepherds of Israel*, who are always most marvellously struck with such celestial Phenomenons, how could they be but affected and appaled on the occasion? Impossible. Comets are dreadful things, especially in their perihelion; at least, till their use and commission are sufficiently known—to repair the wastes of Creation; give renovations of fire and light to exhausted luminaries; and thus evince even to the voluntarily stupid, that a gracious, ever wakeful PROVIDENCE attends to all his works, and will not suffer the wearings and decays of his General System to be long unrepaired. In this view, always patent to rational, intelligent minds, how benignly and placidly, these splendid, resplendent friends of Creation hold on their ethereal way, their vivid paths of cloudless azure! Without these illustrious visitors, the arrangement and oeconomy of things could not subsist; the glorious and beautiful works of God, by their own intercourses and mutuality of operation, would insensibly debilitate and impede one another's movements.

The analogy between the natural and moral world, to drop the allegory, is at once clearly discernible. How perfect so ever the Institutions of Heaven, regarding our conduct and behaviour, as free, accountable beings, in this world; how plain, simple and explicit soever, yet there are so many causes of counteraction resulting from the dominion of the senses over mankind, pride, ambition, covetousness, love of pleasure, and love of ease; that they are perpetually liable to be corrupted, perverted, and obscured; and indeed with regard to their original intention, totally lost, were it not for the wise interposition of that great and good BEING, who first graciously conceived and sent them into the world. The Jewish Dispensation, in its pristine, genuine form, was truly excellent.

excellent. The Decalogue, so positively and clearly expressed, might have been sufficient, one should think, sanctified by the incontestible evidence of its coming directly from the Almighty God, to have secured the uniform duty and obedience of the Jews. But it was quite otherwise. They fell very soon into the vilest and most detestable Superstition and Idolatry. Hence the repeated interposition of God, by his Prophets, became necessary. Even these holy and venerable men, assisted by a series of the most signal and uncontrovertible Miracles, were unequal to the task of preserving the purity and virtue of the Jews, or keep alive their unaffected attention to the worship of the one Supreme Being. Hence they may justly be said to have conspired against themselves, and brought about their own final ruin and destruction, as a nation and people. Hence the necessity of Christianity, a new Revelation of the mind and will of God, by the hands of a no less dignified Messenger than his own Son.

Although the original table of moral law, delivered to the Jews, remained unabrogated by Jesus Christ; yet did he superadd to it, explain and exemplify, a set of maxims and precepts, in every idea of them most admirably calculated to promote the peace, stability, and happiness of human Society; and so intrinsically excellent and beneficent are they, that they serve also as our certain foundation of joyful and triumphant hopes, with regard to a future world; an immortality of glory and beatitude, clearly and undeniably revealed by the Gospel. The grand and fundamental pillars of this highly improved and extended System, being love to God, and charity to Mankind, at large; no one, it might reasonably have been expected, could on any occasion or pretence, mistake its genius and force; free, perfectly free from all the Ritual clogs and embarrassments, the heavy yokes and burdens of the Jewish Theocracy.

So plain and explicit was every thing necessary to the perfection of duty intended, that the inspired writers themselves assure us, *that he who runs may read; and who so readeth let him understand*; with other expressions of the same kind, importing that every one *ought* to read,
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and every one *may* understand. Our Divine Master himself orders us, *to search the Scriptures* ; not, surely, to grope in the dark for treasure, and to stumble on it by mere chance ; but with the fullest light and happiest certainty, to find, as oft as we look for it. These are his generous and blessed words to all. *Nay, why even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right ?*—Notwithstanding all this, is it credible, is it even possible, that this altogether pure and unaffectedly simple Scheme of moral duty and obligation, has been basely disfigured, and egregiously misapprehended ? Nothing can be more certain than it has ; and even by those very men that pretended to preserve it uncorrupted and entire ; by the Priesthood, who in every age, by falling down before the God of this world, have been the means of defacing and mutilating every Religious Dispensation that has yet appeared ; that is, by destroying its only characteristic excellence, its mark of divine original, its simplicity, its obviousness, its fitness and facility of accommodation to the apprehensions, circumstances and exigencies of every individual : whereby they started the pretence of taking it into their own hands, and keeping it as a secret, mysterious deposit, to be dealt out at times, and in proportions, of their own entire appointment ; making that a trade and monopoly, in the mercenary hands of a *few*, which Almighty God, the Creator and Father of us all, intended and willed to be the equal stationary possession of all ; like the light of the sun, or the column of air we breathe. To buy the Gospel or the Blessings of the Gospel at the hands of a set of men in black, no more intrusted with a divine, exclusive Commission, than we are ourselves (all the Laity) is a circumstance too singular and unparelled, to enter into the heads of any body of men, but those alone who had conspired together to make the most of the Gospel by selling it.

In all traffic, whether religious or civil, a principal point is to have a variety of Articles in store, and to advertise them to the world, as rare and super-excellent in their kind. Churchmen were too wise in their generation to neglect a thing so indispensibly necessary at setting off. Beginning this new species of trade, under the auspicious charter and protection of Constantine, and
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finding a large and increasing demand for what they had to dispose of; they extended their spiritual warfs and store-houses to such a degree, and furnished them so completely, that nothing short of universal credit, unexhausted circulation of specie, overgrown fortunes, and consequent stateliness of commercial demeanour, were to be seen or talked of: Stocks sacerdotal stood at an amazing height; the Christian Change Alley swarmed with successful adventurers, and *Io Peans, Io Triumpho's*, ran glidingly through the whole ambitude of business.—But alas!

Religion never gains from passions edg'd,
 'To sons of Peace alone her word is pledg'd.
 The *Pearl of Price* inestimable, tost
 From JEW to JEW, soon its bright splendence lost;
 Press'd, finger'd, soil'd, not worn the man to deck,
 Celestial glory's medal round his neck:
 Thus ocean, roll'd by tempests to and fro,
 Loses its vivid sheen, its amber show.

Remarkable also is the dissimilitude between the ecclesiastical and common method of mercature. Go we into a jeweller's, a bookseller's, a silk mercer's shop, we are instant accosted and treated in the most courteous manner possible; all their ware-rooms, shelves, drawers, caskets, are laid open to our view: still more; they are emptied, and their contents spread upon the counter, for our more minute and curious inspection: not a gem but we may critically examine in all its surfaces and angles; not a volume, however splendidly bound and gilded, but we may, in every section, in every page, throw our eyes over; not the most exquisite piece of Asiatic manufacture, the richest production of the Silkworm, but we may unfold and inspect by the most trying lights: nay, what is more extraordinary still, notwithstanding it be known we are *not* to purchase; all the above means of gratification are freely indulged us, without one feature of the vender's countenance altered from perfect obligingness and civility.—But behold the contrast.—I am downrightly ashamed to bring into the company of such fair respectable dealers our

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—Church salesmen and smugglers of Gospel commodities : in comparison, positively no better, even if I had called them refettters of stolen goods. If not smuggled and stolen, why are the store-keepers afraid to expose them to public view ? why should they be put under double locks of security and occultation ? why should we be told, by certain ticketed supercargoes, that they are severally the very best of their kind, of materials uncommonly fine, and manufactured with uncommon finishing and judgment, yet be denied every opportunity of being convinced, by handling with our *own* hands, and seeing with our *own* eyes ; means of information, to us, which nothing can supply ?—The burden of these queries, it would seem, is neither unreasonable nor immoderate.—But what of that ? *ferro de verberat umbras*.—We must take them on their simple affirmation, though their affirmation no better than our own ; or else be contented to go disattired and naked, exposed to the sneer, sometimes the insult, of the better arrayed, but, perhaps, not more intitled to the best and most comfortable array.

Were merchants of another kind to imitate so unworthy so wretched a pattern, their trade should turn ruinous on their hands, and their shops be deserted : in objects such as they deal in, though far inferior in estimate, we will not suffer ourselves to be put off without the natural information of our senses : yet marvellous as it should seem, our Reverend sons of merchandize absolutely, to appearance, prosper the better in consequence of such a disability laid on our perceptive powers : so effectually, but so dishonourably have they ESTABLISHED their credit.—This unexampled credit, nothing it would appear, will be able to shake, till a portion of that SPIRIT, which *overturned the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves* in the Temple, shall awake, shall animate to divine rage and enthusiasm, some of those many profound dormitants, that now repose in the arms of Establishment, and every now and then gulp over, if unvoluntarily roused to oscitation, the narcotic *Repetatur Haustus* : that fatal draught, which Establishment's ever watchful Dæmon is but too ready to administer ;

nister; the Dæmon of spiritual pride, ambition, love of pleasure, and love of money; those splendid but professed foes of all Gospel-truth, Gospel-light, Gospel-peace, and Gospel-amity! —

The general invitation of Scripture is. *Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* How pertinent and spirited also is the exhortatory address which follows! how directly applicable to every artificial endowed Church!—*Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not BREAD? your labour for THAT which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently to me:—eat ye that which is GOOD, and let thine SOUL delight itself in fatness*.*—But all this was spoken only as a typical representation of good things to come, by the mouth of a Prophet: let us attend to that gracious Personage who verified the prediction in every tittle. *Whoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst†. I Am the living bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever‡. This bread, this water, is always at our acceptance. Ask, and ye shall receive: seek, and ye shall find: for he that asketh, (the divine assurance is repeated) receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth.* To which this is the happiest of all appendages. **FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE §.** How can any Establishment read this text without blushing for her own miserly spirit! for her tests, and her incapacitations!—The amount of the whole is thrown into the following solicitous, energetic, and affectionate exhortation. **AND YE WILL NOT COME UNTO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE ||.** A truly astonishing specimen of the grace, liberality, undistinguishingness, and eleemosynary benevolence of the Gospel!—

Opposed to this blessed and indearing representation, how impoverished, churlish and niggardly, the genius and temper of legal, popular Christianity! Inferior as

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* Isaiah lv. 12.
§ Matt. x. 8.

† John iv. 14
|| John v. 40.

‡ Idem vi. 51.

its rewards and gratifications certainly are, and superproportionate to their real value the smallest transfer on our part ; yet, before we can be intitled to them, we must give up the most exquisite of our possessions, in the absence of which nothing can be excellently valuable whatever—our moral Free-agency, our religious Independence! must offer up as a sacrifice, an oblation, our Reason, our Understanding, our intellectual Identity, at the ignoble shrine, on the mercenary altar of Subscription, of Adjuration to mortals like ourselves; *wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked!*—Like ourselves did I say?—No! incomparably our inferiors ; inasmuch as we have not the unmanly guilt, the subtlety more than colubrine, to answer for, of deceiving and insnaring them.—They continue to insult us indeed with the notion, so long as we have the dumb tractability of the horse we ride, of the oxen we goad in our plow, that it is not to them we Subscribe, but to the Doctrines of Christianity.—Hypocritical and mendacious subterfuge!—The only Doctrines of Christianity, are *Love to God* and *Love to Man*. These include, by epitomizing the whole. ON THESE HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. But the Doctrines of ENGLISH, and SCOTISH Christianity, have not a word, from beginning to end, of LOVE, either to God or to man. No! NOT ONE WORD.—Marvellous and incredible indeed, did not THIRTY NINE Articles, consecrated by the Church, and legalized by the State, serve to attest, but never to justify the flagrant omission.—LOVE IS THE FULFILMENT OF THE LAW. The contrary then must be the infraction of the Law. *Think not* (says our Lord) *I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* Ergo, the Anglican Church hath enacted and published thirty nine special Articles, to oppose and annul the Gospel, a System of Love—the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets.—*He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for GOD IS LOVE.* No wonder therefore, that ARTICULAR CHRISTIANITY is so utterly incapable of teaching the true Knowledge of God ; seeing it no where (positively *no where*) professedly inculcates *the Love of God*.—The Love and Knowledge of God, are commu-

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table terms.—Let not such men tell us then that we subscribe to the Doctrines of Christianity, when we Subscribe certain Articles at their requisition; subscribe Doctrines that overturn Christianity, but that tend to support the filthy lucre, the secularity, and uncharacteristic distinctions of the Clergy.

The whole *postulatum* of Duty, as contained in our Bibles, is self-evident and self-attested; full of grace and truth, without partiality and without hypocrisy; but the Doctrines of the Church are not, for their ambiguity, darkness, contradiction, have set all the nations of Europe by the ears, like so many gladiators or prize-fighters, for upwards of a thousand years.—Picking them out of the Scriptures by the most partial sinister dealing (every thing cannot but be partial and sinister, that sets the world a wrangling and disputing) and embodying them by themselves, is a keen and convincing proof that they never belonged to the Scriptures. If they assuredly do, why take them thence? is their situation in the Bible, their alledged *natale solum*, disfigured or disgraced by what goes before, or what follows after, that they must be bound up separately in Canonical finery, and with Canonical *imprimatur*? Is it because, in their original place, mankind should have overlooked them entirely, as matter of hostile argumentation and invidious surmise; not wishing to carry their ideas of the Christian life militant, the spiritual warfare, to so outrageous a length, as actually to scold and call names? Is it that we should not look upon ALL Scripture as of divine inspiration, as all confessedly not equally adapted to OUR case? or that we should consider some parts as *more* divinely inspired than others?—These plain questions must be resolved by a far other method than the summary one of an *ipse dixit*, or *sic volo*: as God *must* be fallible, if the Church be infallible.—I, even I, the poor insignificant assaulter of the ASSAULTERS of the house of *Jason*, may have *my* little pert *ipse dixit*, *my* little assuming *sic volo*. What authority disarms me of these polemical cut and thrusts, yet leaves them in the full possession of the other?—I allow it; the same that enjoins the adoration of his Holiness's toe, though as liable to impurities,

rities as his footman's; the same that places the cap of infallibility on his thrice sacred head, although the wooden head on which his perukes are powdered, should seem to deserve it better, as it would wear it without CLAIMING it.—The Pope too hath his ABSTRACT of the Bible, his *Articular Credenda*.—There are, says his Infallibilityship, mysterious Truths, recondite treasures, in the Bible, very liable to be misapprehended; therefore, totally unfit for common eyes, *i. e.* the eyes of the Laity, in short, any but his own all-seeing eyes; lest (a very momentous *lest* to him, it must be acknowledged, as well as for *all* Popes, wherever their toes presented for adosculations) lest they should turn confusion into order, and darkness into light.

Philosophers, of telescope inspiration, assure us there are *spots* in the Sun. Why did they not, in their maculating mood, turn Popes on our hands, and order us to shut out eyes, not daring to survey that glorious luminary, till we had him brought down to our standard of opticity, in some dirty pool of water under our feet; his orb without his splendor? They had undoubtedly a better right to lay an embargo on our eyes, than *divine* Philosophers to lay one on our Understandings. With all his *maculae*, our sight is always in danger of being dazzled and hurt, by looking too stedfastly on the sun; but what injury could have accrued to our Understandings, had their liberty been ever so unbounded, from reading the Bible, even in its logical awkwardness and dishabile? To the dictators of our faith, no doubt, scath very material, and very affecting, should have been the immediate consequence, the bonds of Church Supremacy broken asunder like the fastenings of a rope of sand round the magnipotent wrists of a giant; the fortress of human Superstition, that idolatrous edifice of our own rearing up, yielding and giving way to the resistless scalade of COMMON SENSE, like a nest of wasps before the sweep of a sickle.

What has not yet been done, at some future happier period, may be done, nay, *must* be done, if we at all credit the authority of Jesus Christ. *This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto ALL.* But instead of this, what the Hierarchy would

would have us consider as the Gospel of the Kingdom, I mean their own Establishment, the Gospel of the Kingdom of—ENGLAND, has lain slumbering hitherto in the concavity of episcopal mitres; folded up in the circumfluent hap of MY LORD's aulic robe. *These* must be thrown back to their rightful owners, the Pope and his Cardinals; or *that* must slumber on, till waked to astonishment by the last trumpet. Moreover, the same divine Person assures us that *As the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even to the West; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*—Now, instead of holding inward this progressive course of illumination, keeping in this beautiful path, *the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day*: The Church, as by municipal law Established, sits on a throne of darkness, in chaotic majesty; extending her leaden sceptre over multitudes of opaque beings, like herself, groping and grappling around her, not knowing whither they go; on whom a little luminary called by Reverend astronomers, REFORMATION, like the moon wading in mist, and three parts of four eclipsed, just meant to give them an idea of their situation, shifts from one to another with sickly and pallid gleam: *having set her candle under a bushel*, instead of setting it on the top of a hill. She has absolutely come under the most solemn adjurations to her Creeds and her Articles, little paper idols of her own manufacture and setting up, to condemn, reprobate, anathematize, and exclude for ever from her Society, all that will not bow down with her and worship them; however they may have sworn allegiance before to God and their Bibles. To protest against this established System of hatred and malevolent exclusion, Scripture, a System of undistinguishing love and charity, steps in with peculiar grace and dignified interestedness.

Let it be observed here, that mere grammatical Gender alters not the mode nor aptness of application, neither does the energy of the sacred Texts less apply to a Church, than an individual. This was observed before. It is remarkably pertinent to our purpose, that the different messages to the Churches in the Apocalypse, though consisting of great aggregate bodies, consider each of them as *one person or individual*. Established Churches,

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in particular, have one common identity or specific criterion among them, SUBSCRIPTION; this constitutes, at once, their Unity and Accountableness: the unity of the whole is the unity of the several parts, and *vice versa*. Take Subscription away, and you destroy the entire body, in the same way that you destroy the body natural by taking away its principle, life. What concerns a single person in the Church, immediately interests the whole, because all have one *Confessional existence*; if the General Confession be wrong, all are wrong; if right, all are right: so that Truth, immutable god-like Truth depends here on the throwing of a dye, the casting voice of a popular Assembly. How then should such made-up, artificial, corruptible Churches, each of them (corruptible, as merely put and held together by human device, by that futile being man, who cannot preserve himself from corruption, much less what is the work of his hands, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*) how should each of them smite her dignified bosom with the unaffected Publican's exclamation, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, upon reading over such texts as the following, directly levelled at her exclusionary spirit, her systematic odium and reprobation of mankind! N. B. What the Church decrees in Convocation, EVERY one of her Members decrees at home in his closet, unless he has broken his oath and polluted himself with perjury: but not like the monarch in his closet, *To commune with his own heart, and be still*. No rigid Churchman ever consulted his heart, but when he accepted a Stall or a Living, as Judas did the bag—to destroy his Master,

He that *hateth his brother, is in darkness, walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and*

and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. If God so loved us, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, we ought also to love one another. This beloved Apostle talks so pathetically, so divinely of Love, that methinks it is marvellous there should be any such thing as Hatred in the world, especially as a bond of common Subscription in a Church! He goes on, *There is no fear in love; perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment: he that feareth, is not made perfect in love.* How imperfect then must that Church be all whose gradations fear one another, from Metropolitans even down to Curates! Their chief fear is — not of offending a weak brother, of casting stumbling blocks in his way, of causing him, by their traditions, to make void the commandments of Heaven, and lording it over the Heritage of God; but of taking the beam out of their own eye, lest they might spy a mote only in their neighbour's eye; and of becoming all things to all men, in order to gain some!—Whose chief fear is that the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world, as a witness to all nations; that the kingdom of God should not come with observation, and instead of being temporalized and ostentatiously endowed, should, as our Saviour expresses it, be merely within us!

Whose chief fear is, that the Kingdom of God should be like the lightning that shineth from the East even unto the West; instead of being the glimmer of a farthing-candle under a bushel, or of some greasy lamp, in an anchorite's cell!—Whose chief fear is, that the partition-wall of Rites and Ceremonies shall be broken down, like that of the Jews, to give admission, without a TEST, to Apostolical Christianity, pure and undefiled before the Father; who, unfortunately for them is a SPIRIT, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth; for such alone the Father seeketh to worship him!—Whose chief fear is, that God should be no Respector of Persons, but accept every one in every nation, that shall fear him and work righteousness; and that where two or three are met together in Christ's name, he shall be in the midst of them to bless them!—Whose chief fear is, that the great Goddess Diana of the

the Ephesians should be injured in her shrine, or her pedestal; in consequence of which, the Silver-smiths and Craftsmen, and WORKMEN OF LIKE OCCUPATION, should *with their craft, by which they have their wealth, be in danger to be set at nought*; the temple of the goddess despised, and her magnificence destroyed.—No wonder therefore, under the agony of so terrible an apprehension, that some should cry at one thing, and some another, THE ASSEMBLY BEING CONFUSED; but that all at length uniting in one voice should cry out, in the true style of Orthodoxy, GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS!

How poor must the Constitution of that Church be, even to common pity, however her lordly Sons, *gerentes se pro centro mundi*, which, instead of *the gates of hell not being able to prevail against her*, is liable to have even her center pillar shook to the very foundation by the lightest breath of ridicule, or wafture of a pin's point from the half-bent bow of Satire! Perhaps she may plume herself upon our Saviour's declaration, *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you*. But, unhappily for her, the concluding part of the text destroys the application. It is added, *falsely, for my sake*. But it cannot be falsely for *his sake*, as his cause and that of the Church, his Kingdom and that of the Church, are quite distinct and opposite. A Church in worldly persecution and distress, under the frowns of Princes, and the continued lash of secular tyranny; wandering from place to place, without resting-place or habitation, *without a stone to lay her head upon* (the situation of her Divine Founder) although *the very foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests*; such a Church alone (which indeed in a moderate sense is every Church not Established) has a right to the appropriation of the text. This is put beyond a cavil by the comparison subjoined. *For so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you*. Now, who does not know the condition of the antient Prophets? Men that lived in outward meanness and poverty; inhabitants of solitudes, mountains, deserts, dens and caves; some of them even fed by the ravens of heaven! Despised, hooted at, thrown into dungeons, lions dens, burning

burning fiery furnaces, slain by the sword, and loaded with curses off the face of the earth !

To all mankind, more or less circumstanced as above, the divine assurance in the text comes with peculiar felicitation, as the source of infinite comfort. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad ; for great is your reward in Heaven.* A Church however, in every particular the emblazed reverse of poverty, suffering and affliction, may justly be said in the words of St. Peter, *to have neither lot nor part in this matter, her heart not being right in the sight of God.* A Church even in right of her Constitution, and in right of Acts of Parliament (meanly solicited in her favour, when she forsook her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, and the protection of God, *who is able even of these stones to raise up Children unto Abraham*) that riots in the good things of this world, *clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day.* A Church that, instead of being a warfaring suffering Church, is a triumphant one, triumphant below, triumphant before her time, with all the powers of this world at her back ; instead of having them in front boldly and nobly resisting them ; depending wholly on the guardianship and providence of God. A Church that, instead of humbly and patiently looking for the glorious appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will assuredly come, and will not tarry, clothed in the majesty of his Father, and attended by his mighty angels ; has already seated herself in *his* judgment-seat, and antedated the Last Day and General Resurrection, by holding jurisdiction over Conscience, and the inward convictions of men's minds ; in consequence of which she admits into, and excludes from her Presence, as she sovereignly wills and pleases, the sheep and goats, arranged on her right-hand and on her left ; saying, in so many words to those on her right, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :* to those on her left, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*—A Church that, in fine, instead of ministering, and washing the Disciples feet, in imitation of Jesus Christ, is proudly and splendidly ministered unto by kings, princes and nobles ; who pay her annual exten-

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five tribute, notwithstanding her Lord's declaration of receiving no honour, no testimony from men ; and this not from voluntary incidental largesses, but by express stipulation and compact, or as a certain high-toned Prelate chuses to call it, ALLIANCE ; for which on her part she returns ample value (alas ! too ample !) relinquishes her connexions with Christ's Invisible Kingdom, and the retributions of another world ; only promised to such as over come *this*, as our blessed Lord overcame it, by being superior to it, by uniformly despising it, and turning his back on all its allurements and temptations.—Relinquishes her specific relation to the Evangelists and Apostles, who severally have left us their strong and pointed protests against all such proud assuming Combinations of Christians, as modern Establishments are ; in general characterising them as, heavy burdens and intolerable yokes of bondage ; as spiritual witch-craft in high places ; as the unjust steward ; the wicked servant, who supposing his Lord *delayed his coming, began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. As Lords over the Heritage of God, not Ensamples to the flock. As thieves and robbers that come not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climb up some other way ; to steal, to kill, and to destroy. As false Christs, false Teachers, false Prophets, who come in sheeps clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. As Antichrists, the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, sitting in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God ; whose coming is with all power, and signs and lying wonders.*

It is especially to be remarked, that all the above highly adumbrated characters cannot by any means apply to individuals, or small detached societies ; but to great congregated stationary Bodies (however mentioned often in the singular number) in alliance with the powers of this world ; for they are represented as doing enormous and unbounded mischief ; as exhibiting mighty and astonishing acts, which could not possibly be done in a corner, or without the connivance and concurrence of imperial or royal authority. In short, the lines are so deeply marked, the circumstances so legibly distinctive, that every authoritative, power-invested, law-giving Religious
Establishment

Establishment now in Christendom, cannot but be taken into the egregious account ; yet the true Church of Christ, the pure primitive Religion of the Apostles, be still supposed separately existing in its several kingdoms.

The fact, as here specified, has the entire support of Scripture, as well as Common Sense. The Church, or Kingdom of Christ is always represented in the sacred Oracles, as an handful, a few ; as little scattered nameless, noiseless societies ; too small, too inconsiderable to be known in the tumultuous mass of the people, were they not struck with the novelty of their virtue, their humility and self-denial ; as solitary travellers, pilgrims, sojourners ; slipping softly and silently through life, yet consecrating every path they tread, like the lambent gentle light of the moon, in the immense world of waters, which no one feels but in its effect of *regulating* their tides. Analogous to this idea of paucity, are the Scriptural metaphors, of the strait gate, and narrow way leading to life eternal, which we are told, *few* will enter, *few* will find. Christians of this class are also called by the endearing diminutives of, *Little Children*, *Little Flock*. Our Saviour himself delights to talk of them, *as sheep that know his voice and will not listen to the voice of a stranger. I am the door* (says he, talking of the sheep-fold) *by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* A beautiful representation of the innocence and simplicity of his genuine followers, at the same time, of their perfect unconstrainedness and freedom under him, as their Shepherd, well represented by the words *going in and out*.

Establishments form a sad contrast here ! In indeed you may go ; out you shall not go. But the dispersion, erratic sojournment, and unrespecting universality of Christ's kingdom, is not less finely, than truly depicted in the following verse, relating directly to the Last Day. *And He shall send his Angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.*—From the whole it appears, that, independent and totally exclusive of all national incorporated Churches, *the Gospel*
of

of Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, may subsist, has subsisted, and shall subsist, to the end of the world: if so, then the Churches of Rome, England, and Scotland, must be SOMETHING altogether distinct and different from THIS KINGDOM; as distinct and different as many and few; the spirit of authority and the spirit merely of submission; perfect freedom from human spiritual Masters, and perfect thralldom to human spiritual Masters; indifference, superiority to this present life, and the eager tenacious grasp of it; and in a word, the God of this world, and the God of the next. What this Something is, will be easier denied, than disproved.

All Parties are delighted and gratified to call modern Rome ANTICHRIST, because, it pushes aside the finger of observation from themselves. The procedure is less honest than satisfactory. But why is she Antichrist, *sitting as God in the Temple of God, shewing that she is God?* Undoubtedly, from her usurping and holding supreme dominion over the MIND, to which God only has access, and over which can alone exercise authority or jurisdiction. The same Prophetic Apostle that so strikingly gives us the outlines of Antichrist, *the man of sin, the son of perdition*, in another place tells us particularly what he means by the Temple of God. Some might mistake it for St. Peter's or St. Paul's: but no such thing. Stone and mortar, assimilated into walls, arcades, columns, porticos, and balconies; form a becoming enough assembling-place for the mere contrivers and builders, who, in comparison with their dome, are no more than bees swarming around their hives: but for the *Divine Majesty, He whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain*—let not the mole-hill be mentioned as his habitation, his *domicilium!*—*God dwells not in Temples made with hands.* There is a Temple which he himself has chosen, which when pure and holy, is the only one he inhabits, or can inhabit, except INFINITUDE. St. Paul shall in a few happy words inform us *where* this Temple is, and what it is. MAN is the Temple of God. *Know ye not that YE are the Temple of God? and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the Temple of God is holy, WHICH*

Temple

Temple ye are. Paul's Lord and Master expressed the same thing in other words, *The Kingdom of God cometh not with OBSERVATION : the Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU.*

This being apparent at first sight, that peculiar crime fastened on the Church of Rome is, indeed, of the most flagitious nature ; it is no less than dispossessing the Living God of this Living Temple, in order, impiously and idolatrously, to seat herself in his place ; which is undoubtedly equivalent to the voluntary, deliberate disbelief and denial of his existence and Providence, downright avowed Atheism. I might truly say, the enormity is still higher. The Atheist dishonours and blackens not the Perfections and Attributes of God, for he acknowledges no God ; his Supreme Majesty and Glory, according to his forlorn system, do not subsist ; so cannot possibly be subtracted from or debased. Moreover, he has the singular felicity and merit of admitting no other Being whatever in his stead, which would be only dethroning one sovereign Existence, to constitute and recognize another, more adapted perhaps to his taste and fancy ; far less does he swell into the tremendous misprision of guilt, by erecting himself into Supremacy, and snatching, from the hands of the unseen eternal JEHOVAH, the universal reins of Intellectual Dominion. No ! The Roman Pontiff is that wonderful MAN OF SIN !

Under the evidence and belief of Christianity, the Spirit of God, God himself, by a scriptural energy of language, is said to *dwell in us*. I might adduce numberless examples of this in express terms, both from the Evangelists and Writers of the Epistles. The mind then, properly disposed to receive the light and truths of Revelation, is the immediate Temple of God : now, for any human created Power whatsoever, to act and decree, as if this Temple were accessible to their eye, or their touch : as if it could be traversed by the upward or sidelong glance, be visited in all its angles and corners by the restless and inquisitive foot—What is it ? The same thing precisely, as if we should pretend to regulate the invisible powers of Attraction in the poles, by sending an audible, peremptory message

message to this effect, by the winds, to the North and to the South ; or should summon the Needle, by a formal Bull pronounced over its trembling points, to turn unfaithful to its duty, and reverse its positions.

If we take the Temple of God, contradistinctively to Temples made with hands, in a more extended sense, as comprehending the Christian Church scattered throughout the world, still the Scriptural Premises are the same, and so must the conclusions. The belief of Almighty God, by his Spirit, being present with the Human Mind in ten thousand different places, with respect to Him, still preserves the idea of unity ; all these variety of Temples are thus but one Temple, constituted perfectly alike respecting inaccessibility to all mortal intrusion, although in the abstract each one independent of the other. So that MAN being a religious free Agent or Intelligence, accountable with regard to the regulation and oeconomy of his internal frame to no Power inferior to the Supreme, wherever he is found, or however in exteriors he may happen to be circumstanced, is indeed *the Temple of the Living God*, and the only NATIVE Temple he can possibly have upon Earth. Even the Solomonic Temple at Jerusalem, the most magnificent and superb monument of human art and labour that ever the world saw, it is signally remarkable, was only intended for occasional acts of ritual, ceremonial, and sacrificial devotion. At all other times, the doors were shut, all the avenues to it locked up ; all within it utterly lifeless and at rest : so that, during these long intervals, it was as if it had not been ; no more, as conscious of his presence, the Temple of Almighty God, than any other public building in Jerusalem. But the Temple of God *not built with hands*, in which only He delights to dwell, is always open, always free of access to the Individual, always alive, and always conscious. Even at the time the Solomonic Temple existed He, had a far other Temple among the Jews, the Temple, not of the ceremonial, but the MORAL LAW, the eternal Law of Nature, of Truth and Equity. This, among the Jews as well as now among Christians, was in every one's Breast, to which particularly referred the Decade of divine Precepts or Commands, delivered to Moses

on

on Mount Sinai. The first, in comparison with this, or when venerated in contradistinction to this, which indeed it generally was, was always represented by the Prophets of God, and the Judges of his People, in the most beggarly insignificant terms. Its gold of Ophir, its precious stones, its burnished utensils, goblets, vases, and candlesticks; its altars of incense, and gorgeous furniture, hateful and abominable in the sight of a pure and holy God. The Writers of the Old Testament represent this difference, this dissimilitude, by the strongest efforts of expression, the boldest and most masculine figures. It is a fine and noble Subject, capable of important and copious discussion. But, at present, the Writer must drop it. Let it suffice just to mention the obvious but memorable result of all.

Through a long series of time, ages upon ages, and generations upon generations, where we have astonishing unremitted displays of Divine placability, patience and forbearance; the one Temple was deserted and despised, while the other continued to be crowded with Sacrifices, Oblations, peace-offerings, freewill-offerings, &c. &c. till Religion, or the true Worship of God, was buried in superstitious forms; and Devotion had brawled away its powers in the inanity of much speaking, long prayers, pharisaical noise, boasting, and affectation: making *clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, while within they were full of extortion and excess*: whence, *their House was left unto them desolate*. In private domestic scenes of pure virtue, unaffected holiness, integrity, and doing good, how habitually defective were the Jews! These were the offices and services connected with the inward invisible Temple, but these they neglected and abandoned; thinking no doubt, all should be made up by their expensive devotions in the outward national Fane, built of materials, as cold and insensible as their own hearts—Notwithstanding their periodical attendance *there* year after year, and cycle after cycle, how loudly and bitterly did their Prophets exclaim and inveigh against them! More than one half of their writings is a general inculpatory charge against them, of base ingratitude, want of trust and confidence in God; lukewarm-

ness, deceit and hypocrisy ; of their neglecting and abandoning his ordinances, his statutes, his testimonies ; forgetting his promises, his Providences, his miracles, his wonderful works : in short, their defiling the Temple of God, the Temple of their minds ; the scriptural punishment of which is destruction.

It was so : for defiling the invisible Temple of the Almighty, the visible one was destroyed ; no stone was left upon another ; it was levelled with that earth from which it arose, so glorious and so aspiring, and on which it rested as its *immediate* support : while, as a People, its proud and boastful Worshipers were divided and broken, scattered over the face of the whole Earth, a proverb to the nations, and an amazement to themselves. — One Superlative resource still remained. Jesus Christ came into the world. He offered himself to them as their Saviour and Deliverer, before he turned himself to the nations at large. They rejected him, still tenacious of their Temple and superstitions. The Romans then fulfilled Christ's express prophecy : Jerusalem was sacked, and the Temple destroyed : in consequence of which, all Ritual and Ceremonial Worship ceased, ceased in the Person of Jesus Christ ; who in its place has consecrated the MIND OF MAN, as the alone Temple of God, and the Religion of the HEART, as the only Religion that will survive the wrecks of Time, and meet him with serene felicitation at his last coming.

From the foregoing detail, it cannot be denied that the true characteristic of Antichrist, is spiritual domination over the Human Mind ; forcible intrusion into things unseen, into the secret recesses of God, the Heart, and the Affections. — Violently to have entered the Jewish Temple, prophaned any of the holy vestments, carried off the sacred utensils, much more to have violated the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, by penetrating within the veil, would never have been forgiven or pardoned ; nay, immediate death itself would not have been deemed an adequate expiation of the offence. A remarkable instance of this happened in the case of St. Paul, who for a more moderate offence than any of the above-mentioned, was furiously dragged

dragged out of the Temple, and would have been murdered and torn to pieces by the ignorant enraged multitude, had he not been rescued by the civil power: the Infatuated Jews growing more and more jealous (a memorable circumstance) of their Temple's exterior purity, the more impure, corrupted and degenerate they grew themselves; infomuch that the above outrage, for an apprehended affront, happened but a very short time before their final ripeness in iniquity, crowned by the lawless, cruel and horrid act, of condemning and crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, in the Jewish Theocracy, if it was esteemed a crime scarcely atoned for by a capital punishment, to prophane a Temple made with hands, and only designed to be temporary in its duration; what judgment shall be formed of that violation which has for its object a Temple *not made with hands*, and a Temple everlasting as the Being who made it, and who has condescendingly styled it *his own habitation*! This violation certainly amounts to the full guilt of Antichrist. He enters into the *Penetralia Dei*, the MIND; would, if he could, turn out the rightful original possessor, and sit down by robbery in his place: as if one soul could swallow up another, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the rest. How descriptive are our Saviour's words in this place, *He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*

He that (as far as he is able) dispossesses God of his Temple, and would take the vacated seat, is guilty of the highest species of IDOLATRY. The idolatrous worship offered to a WOMAN, to Saints, martyrs, Images, pictures, shrines, busts, relics, hosts, Crucifixes, Wafers, however criminal, are mere trifles, mere peccadilloes, compared to the above. Indeed the one is the foundation of all the rest, and without a perhaps, the fatal source of all the corruptions, barbarisms, absurdities, contradictions, raree-show, fopperies, of our modern religio-secular, our politico-evangelical Establishments. A Church, envying the temporal distinctions of Antichrist (which indeed are tempting enough to flesh and

blood, in more than one great kingdom) must dispossess Almighty God of ten thousand Temples, that is, take away THE LIBERTY OF THE MIND from ten thousand forlorn Individuals, before she can, with safety or security, open the guilty gates of her own sacrilegious Temple. No Man, no Christian sensible of his own personal dignity and importance, in having a temple within his own bosom, in being himself a temple, meet, if kept pure and undefiled, for the ready and constant reception of the Eternal God, will ever, to the swine and dogs upon a dunghill, throw away his consciousness of this dignity, this importance; *i. e.* acknowledge or enter any other temple whatsoever, let who will be the builder or consecrator, except merely as a shelter from the storm, a convenient covering from the rains of heaven.—If any Church, let her pretended exclusive charter be what it will, her local privileges, fashion, endowments, alliances, protection, stability; her plea of reformation, purity, spirituality, what she pleases to make them; if any such Church, I say, rather the Scripture says, would tempt you by the magic of artful persuasion, by sanctity affected for the moment, by motives of mercenary seduction, or by the last exploit of pitiful and beggarly zeal, coercion, to enter any other, upon any other account; THAT Church is ANTICHRIST, though not christened *Roman* by name.

This is matter of too serious moment, too awfully and too signally interesting to every Christian, to be left precariously to float on the idle buoy of Conjecture, or on Inuendo's ever-varying streamer. The Writer, as it becomes him, in this age of light and liberty, anxious to know the Truth, *that the Truth may make him free**, must be more explicit.—If the Anglican or Scottish Church rests upon such a bottom, adopts such a procedure, and pushes forward so lawless and tyrannical a scheme; that is, if she has departed from Scripture, from that Allegiance only claimable by Jesus Christ, by keeping one individual within her Communion, contrary to the light of his own mind; engaging him in the fatal warfare

* Our Saviour's words, John viii. 32.

warfare of his Faith opposed to his livelihood; by reducing one individual to *come* into her communion, by any allurements whatever acting solely on the Senses, and which in its own nature is as separable from Christianity, as taught by Christ and his Apostles, as time is from Eternity; much more so, if the former or the latter *one* should turn out to be THOUSANDS; then is the Anglican Church, the Scottish Church, both together or singly, Antichrist; setting up a mode of jurisdiction and authority, not only contrary to that of Jesus Christ, but subversive of it; bringing the Scriptures of Truth into notorious neglect and disuse, by foisting into men's hands their Creeds, their Articles, and their Confessions; that have no spark of propriety or use whatever, but on the supposition that the Scriptures, WITHOUT THEM, should lead us astray, instead of making us wise unto salvation; should teach us damnable heresies, and the doctrines of Devils; and in fine, expressly excluding (so far as they are able) from Heaven and a happy Immortality, those very particular Persons for whom the Saviour of mankind bled and died on the Cross. The negative, that he did not die particularly to save them, they cannot assert, without invading the province of God, *and sitting as God in the temple of God*. The very presumption of boldly asserting such a Negative, would prove and constitute them Antichrist, the very appellation they affectedly disclaim.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, assert and prescribe Doctrines, as essential to Salvation, which are not to be found in the Bible, without taking that fatal and dangerous liberty with the sacred text, which will bear you out, even prosperously, with at least as many more, equally intelligible and respectable as those they have thought proper already to select, and render binding.—Rendered binding—not by their own sterling excellence and obviousness, by striking sympathetically on the Human Mind, as something congenial with its happily-featured, well-conditioned-self. No! Had they been binding only in this endearing and auspicious sense, they never should have been taken out of the Bible,

Bible, their hallowed divine abode: contrariwise, they are rendered binding by the same mode of coercive authority that fixes a value upon land, for a general tax, upon imported goods and commercial commodities, for Custom and Excise duties—AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT: the Spirit and Majesty of GOD confined within the tatters of a mouldy, moth-eaten record! The Omnipotence, the Omniscience and Omnipresence of the SUPREME BEING, begging, with rolls of parchment in their hands, at the Senate-house door of a little Island detached from the world; there to be filled up and endorsed, to find credit and veneration among the People; gain admittance into our weekly Places of bowing to God, and—one another, and perhaps some chance times, as a singular high-rated indulgence, into our closets and our libraries: while what we are wont to *mistake for these* in our Bibles, though clothed in the splendid and immaculate robes of Inspiration, are suffered to repose where moths repose, and where spiders in pity cover them with their webs!

These Doctrines have one general characteristic of obscurity and inconceiveableness; which their greatest admirers and best friends, have not yet been able to illuminate, or render congruous to Common Sense. Hence arose the necessity of securing their credit and honour, by oaths and subscriptions; for had they been self-evident or self-consistent, there was no occasion to force or guarantee our belief of them; we should have believed them whether we would or no, as we unavoidably believe our own existence, or the existence of the sun's light and heat. But as they met us in the dark, and kept us in the dark, and consequently, rendered us the more ductile, because the more ignorant subjects and instruments of their despotic jurisdiction; therefore, were they proposed to us in forms of adjuration and subscription. *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum!*

To such unworthy, contemptible shifts are even sober and grave men reduced, in attempting to do what cannot be done—sanctify their hold of usurped dominion, with which the reputation of senseless Articles and blundering
Creeds

Creeds is intimately connected. In these Legendary Figments, *Imposition* would throw the mantle of mystery over her shoulders, in order to pass undetected; and *Mystery*, merely scholastic and technical, would daringly inrobe herself in the Omniscience and Majesty of the SUPREME GOD! *He who dwelleth in light inaccessible and full of glory; and clothes Himself with light as with a garment: who is light itself, and in whom there is no darkness at all!* He who sent Jesus Christ expressly, *to be the light of the world, and the enlightener of every one that cometh into the world:* who again, to keep up the uniform idea of communication, tells his Disciples. *Ye are the light of the world: a city that is set on a hill, cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may SEE your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. If your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light; but if your eye be double, your whole body shall be full of darkness: but if the light within you be darkness, how great is that darkness!* Hypocrisy or duplicity (*the double eye*) is here joined with darkness; honesty and integrity (*the single eye*) with inward light: a striking point of reflection to our Reverend Sons of *Mystery*, who are always men of bigotted narrow spirits, or of covered fraud and artful design. I shall close these truly lucific passages with one of the most beautiful similitudes in the world. *The path of the Just is like the morning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

These happy obvious Texts need no comment. To prove and feel the light of the sun, *is only to open our eyes.* The divine pathos of the whole turns upon the unequivocal word LIGHT; not secreted or hid, but placed on the most commanding situations, that all men may behold, admire, and be directed by it. *Mystery* and *Light*, however the former sanctioned by Creeds and Confessions, are incompatible; they are two distinct opposite things; as much so as Truth and Falshood; Christ and Antichrist. Light can never be mistaken, and objects of every kind, can only become discernible by light.

Heaven

Heaven is the very native region of light ; where sits enthroned in resplendent majesty the FATHER OF LIGHTS : surely then, mystery or darkness can never be the path leading thither.—Within the radiant focus of the above self-obvious Scriptures, how are the mist-immantled conceits of the Schools, the *figmenta cerebri obnubilati*, scattered and lost ! They all hang together by one support, OPACITY ; like a series of icicles upon the head-drop, hardened during the darkness and rigour of incumbent night, but quickly melted by to-morrow's resurgent all-glorious sun.

How emphatically descriptive also are the following predictions of our SYSTEMATIC TEACHERS, uttered by our Saviour Seventeen Hundred Years ago ! *Take heed, that no man deceive you : for many * shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and shall deceive many ; and many false Prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. If any man shall say unto you, lo, here is Christ, or there ; believe it not : for there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; inso-much that, if it were possible, they shall † deceive the very Elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth : behold, he is in the secret chambers ; believe it not.*—Then follow these never-to-be-forgotten words, as declarative of Himself and his Divine Religion, as the other of his enemies and counterfeit friends. *For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West ; so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be.* The Coming of the Son of man, is a highly expressive figure of the promulgation and gradual spread of the Gospel : which is fully evinced by these two texts. *This Generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom ‡.* That is, till the general truth on which these Prophecies rest, shall begin to appear ; alluding to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (near the middle of the first Century) which was the end of the old,

* Matt. c. xxiv. Passim. † Ibid. v. 24. ‡ Matt. xvi. 28.

old, and the beginning of the NEW DISPENSATION, or of *the Son of Man's Coming in his Kingdom*; i. e. the incipient, progressive establishment of *his Kingdom*: besides, even in the Apostolic Age, false Christs, and false Prophets appeared; innovations in his Religion, and consequent persecutions, happened.

The Texts now produced are some of the most remarkable in the New Testament. How strongly picturesque of modern Establishments, i. e. Monopolies of Religion, these phrases of our Divine Lord, THE DESERT! THE SECRET CHAMBERS! The one emblematic of darkness, deviousness, and intricacy: the other of artifice, seduction, narrowness of spirit, restricted good, partial utility; want of benevolence, and want of charity! The marks of reference and points of coincidence, cannot be mistaken, but by men actually swearing and subscribing their names to mistake them: men, many of them, backward and diffident to open their BIBLES, for fear the very first passage that meets their eye, should (how unfortunately!) contradict a Creed, or a Confession.

On the other hand, how striking and splendid the representation of the genuine unadulterated Gospel of Christ, *the lightning which shineth from the East even unto the West*: Which no man or body of men, can confine, secret, or prevent being equally and universally beheld! The images are just the reverse of each other, and become doubly conspicuous by standing in contrast. The Sun rising in the East and gloriously moving forward to the West, is one of the happiest illustrations of Christianity possible; and as our Saviour adopts and uses it, it comes recommended to us by the highest and most amiable Authority, which surely requires no secondary collateral enforcement. No taper or flambeaux is necessary to render the sun more visible. The progress of the sun is steady, serene, slow, imperceptible, but still progressive; so is the advancement of Divine Knowledge and Reformation: how wicked then, and at the same time how impotent every attempt to restrain and retard this divine Knowledge and Reformation, by human political standards! like the proud articulation of a command to the

the sun, on whose advance all our earthly good depends, to stop his course in the firmament, without the Omnipotence to make him do it.

Our Saviour tells us, in the chapter we have quoted so often, that before the end of all things, his Gospel shall be extended and offered to every nation upon Earth. His words are these, which I quote with that delight I would ever wish to be susceptible of, upon seeing the Original Rights and Equality of mankind recognized and asserted. *And this Gospel of the Kingdom (of Christ or of Heaven) shall be preached in ALL the world, for a witness unto ALL nations ; and then shall the end come †.* Now, no Establishment whatever can be the bearer or preacher of *this Gospel of the Kingdom* ; for every Establishment lays obstacles and embargoes in its own way, to clog and impede its progress, which Jesus Christ never laid, never intended, nay, has peremptorily forbid : therefore, every Establishment, let its baptism be what it will, whether Episcopal or Presbyterian, counteracts, *ipso facto*, the design of the Gospel, the extension and circulation of its divine blessings and immunities : it disables itself, and makes *that* local and stationary, which Almighty God sent his own Son to make unrespecting and universal : virtually, but unshamefacedly, would reverse the Declaration of our gracious Lord, so replete with matter of triumph and rejoicing to so many nations, by saying, *And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall NOT be preached in ALL the world, for a witness unto all nations.*

Our two National Churches, in particular, have over and over declared, as often as the cock crows on the dunghill, the cockatrice discharges her venom, that each is, *separatim*, the true Reformed Christian Church. Now oaths and subscriptions are the terms of admission into each, before you can be entitled to her privileges and immunities : that is, in plain English, before you become a Reformed Protestant Christian, you must run the possible, nay I will call it the probable risque, of PERJURY. This is to *do evil that good may come* with a witness.

† Matt. xxiv. 14.

a witness. It is well St. PAUL is not now a *living* judge of such a dilemma—Here then the Gospel of the Kingdom comes to a full pause and period; Inspiration is deprived of her eagle's wing, to fly unto the uttermost parts of the Earth; and Divine Providence, in the act of visiting and delivering all the nations of the world from captivity, *conquering and to conquer*, has the wheel taken off her chariot.—In this matter also, not content with negative, they claim positive merit. *Episcopal* is Divine Ordination; *Presbyterian*, is Divine Ordination. Here are *two* Divine Ordinations directly opposite to each other.—No wonder sure that modern Christians **DIVIDE** their God, when they divide his Church; rent from the top to the bottom a Saviour's seamless garment, and comprize all the nations in the world within the little insular districts of ENGLAND and SCOTLAND!

Is it any wonder, that the Christian Religion, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of peace and mercy, has made so inconsiderable a progress in instructing Indians and Pagans, for many centuries past? In the Apostolic, and two or three succeeding Ages, it swept forward with infinitely greater advance, than ever and altogether it has done since; a period of fifteen hundred years. The reason is as disgraceful, as it ought to be obvious to *Protestants*. At first, men propagated the Gospel, from the pure and generous love of it; from the certain conviction that, in proportion as it extended its influence, in the same proportion would mankind be virtuous and happy. Almighty God himself, by his unseen Providential operation, seconded such liberal and truly divine motives; so much in unison with the genius of that Religion they were spreading and recommending. During all this time its diffusion was inconceivably great and rapid: its acceleration indeed, in such circumstances, might be called *supernatural*, its reception in different nations beyond the orbit of human hope, at least of expectation. More latterly, however, the Princes of the Earth laid violent hands on it, prostituting it as an engine of their power and authority; as the concealed means of extending and establishing their own tyranny and oppression. Having every thing to bestow, and every thing

thing to inflict, they soon found Priests and Churchmen accordant, submissive, and ductile to their mind. They never could have moulded Christianity to their purpose, without securing its professed Pastors and Teachers, now in their *incipient state* of degeneration. The BIBLE itself never could have yielded to their ambitious and lawless necessities, not even remotely connived at them. *Fran- gas, non flectes me.*

From this time the Propagation of the Gospel (that divine and perfect System, inculcating throughout a contempt of the world and superiority to its riches and honours) rested upon a mortal prop, and leaned upon human shoulders. A Rhodian Colossus carried about for a raree-show on a butterfly's wing. Its energy of *Reforming* was repressed, and its ardour of *advancing forwards* quenched in cold water. Being in Royal or Imperial thrall and impoundment, it could not advance, unless, like the snail, with its house of concealment on its back. Every conception it was conscious of, every declaration it uttered, must pass through the medium of Courts and palaces, before it reached *common* Understandings, and *common* ears. If this Conception, this Declaration, even obliquely (which I believe, seldom happened) implied or inferred the necessity of *more* virtue, *more* integrity, *more* truth, in these courts, these palaces; how could it pass, more than bodies through mediums that naturally repel them? Hence, the spirit of progressive melioration, native to the Christian Religion, languished and decayed; considered only as a ragged *Pauper*, a clamorous mendicant, at the gate of Prosperity, and treated accordingly. Henceforward the clear, simple, obvious Truths of the Gospel, put on a mysterious form, and were esteemed sacredly recondite, among the *arcana Imperii*; or like the rusty antique, the time-ate medalion, teeming with learning and information—unlegible.

But all this time, what were the Levites about, the lineal descendants of the Apostles? Why, they were *literally* obtemperating the command of their divine Master. *Making unto themselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; and were indeed received into everlasting*

ing habitations. Habitations—that have defied the floods and winds of fourteen revolving Centuries; notwithstanding the astonishing circumstance of their being built *upon the sand* (happily for them, *sand of gold*) and even now remain unimpaired, in the year 1774: the fair and goodly habitations of *their* far-off successors, REFORMATION's Right Reverend Prelates—*Blessed is the man whom the King delighteth to honour!*

But as seriousness and solemnity are too natural to so affecting a subject, it remains to be lamented, how small an advance Christianity has made in latter times, and how little in proportion to our extensive improvements in Police, Arts, and Philosophy. We seem to sit down persuaded, in the unaccountable infatuation of our spirits, that every Scheme of public usefulness, every object of sentimental enquiry, except *Divine Science* alone, requires and solicits cultivation at our hands. Hence unfortunately it happens, that while we stand foremost, and with peculiar felicity of claim, in the rank of nations for real and important discoveries, both in natural and jurisprudential knowledge, Arts, Physics, and the Belle Letter; we appear altogether satisfied to remain, loitering and benumbed, among the *very last* of them, with respect to pushing forward or encouraging the liberal, emancipated investigation of Truth; by which I would be understood to mean the most excellent of all Institutions, that of the Gospel, the pure and unaffected Religion of Jesus Christ. It is remarkable and significant to the last degree, that He takes every occasion to compare it to objects of similitude and analogy presenting to our minds the *idea of progression*, step by step advancement, and at last, perfection of attainment: such as *the seed sown*, connected with the harvest; the delivery of the talents, connected with their future increase; the first dawn of the sun in the East, gradually brightening and extending to the uttermost point of the West; a Vineyard, a Warfare, a race; a man taking a far journey and leaving his servants their appointed tasks, to be finished against the period of his return: not to mention others of like import and meaning. Now, what else can all these strong, striking comparisons suggest, but that we should never think we have

have already attained, but always be pressing forward ; always gaining, but never satisfied with *present* gain, which consequentially is only *losing*, at least in the article of Time, the most precious deposit in the hands of mankind : other deposits may be recovered or replaced ; *this* alone never can, once we have let it slip out of our power and possession.

Every restraint therefore, every discouragement thrown in the way of our Ability and Ambition to advance in Divine Science, to render the ways of God, the appointments of Providence, less and less obscure and intricate to mankind ; forms an unworthy, nay a criminal attempt, to stop the course of Christianity ; stop the diffusion of Gospel light and knowledge, through nations and people yet grossly uninformed, and sitting in the horrors and rigours of Pagan darkness. No Establishment of Christianity, let its lordly pretensions to primitive excellence be what they will, no spirit of instructing Indian nations, proceeding from the boasted Alliance between Church and State, can ever succeed in planting or watering the Gospel of Christ among them ; for this unanswerable reason that, at the same time it should open their eyes, and illuminate their understandings, it would likewise *bona fide*, render them bondsmen and slaves ; a condition always justly hateful and detestable to people born and used to freedom. This it would effect by introducing, along with the glorious light and privileges of the Gospel, certain theorems and maxims, quite repugnant to its nature, and subversive of its influence ; theorems and maxims, resulting from its connections with the State, always unfavourable to beloved and admired Liberty, that object of possession, I had almost said of *adoration*, tantamount to our love of existence. Thus every Establishment of Religion would throw down with one hand what it built up with the other ; or it would tickle our ears with amusive and captivating representations of God, as our supreme Friend and Benefactor, at the same time that, with the malice and insidiousness of a foe, it would be buckling on the ignominious fetter on our legs ; perhaps indeed, the buckle of gold, and the ligature of silk :

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what then? the labours of the Asiatic silk-worm, and the glittering tribute of Potosi, should but poorly recompence, by barely contrasting the wretchedness of our condition!

Contemplating this subject, I never can forget the famous INCA's reply to the Popish Missionary, as related by the very ingenious Mr. Murphy. The latter was endeavouring, in the true spirit of his Order, to give the Mexican Chief magnificent and enticing ideas of the Christian Religion. These *might* have engaged his esteem and secured his affections, nay, made him a perfect convert; but—a very interesting *but* indeed—he tacks to his representation, the supremacy and uncontrollable jurisdiction of his Lord and Master, at Rome; of his Holiness's undoubted right of transferring empire and dominion; lands, territories, hereditaments, possessions, fiefs, rights, titles, from one to another; in order to do honour to that plenitude of power delegated to him by St. Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and to establish the universal Government of Jesus Christ, the ETERNAL God of Heaven, who he said had died—died and shed his blood on the Cross for his CREATURES—nay, for him, if he believed. To all this hypocritical finess, this sanctimonious villainy, how noble, manly and pertinent the Inca's reply, enough, it should seem to strike debasement to the heart of all Establishments, and to cover them with confusion. “It is absurd, says the honest and intelligent Mexican, on the part of the Pope to grant away a territory which does not belong to him.—For his part, he should continue to venerate the Gods of his Ancestors—and if the Christians adore a God that DIED, he would adore the Sun that NEVER DIED!”—What was the event, indignant Reader? why the murder of this *very Inca*, who spoke the words of everlasting truth and wisdom, and the forcible translation of his rightful, immemorial Possessions, to aliens and strangers; set down, no doubt, among the other innumerable triumphs and *memorabilia* of MODERN CHRISTIANITY. — The Churchman, dressed out in the livery and trappings of the STATE, the significant badge of his Order, his check emblematic of his heart—cold and flaccid; may smile, with infinite courtliness

courtlinefs, upon reading or hearing this story, fmoothing down, all the time, his rochet or his fupplce : but the man whom his CREATOR has *firft* taught, and the BIBLE a *fecond time*, will ever venerate the memory of the almoft-Christian INCA, and execrate all political Faith, all artificial Religion.

The foregoing little narrative carries in its bofom a preponderating weight againft ten thoufand folios on the fide of Church authority and ufurpation. Nor have the claims of Proteftant Eftablifhments often been lefs enormous, than thofe of the Papal, though, by the gracious Providence of God, they happened to be lefs fuccefsful. Eftablifhments, it is true, in their miffionary excursions among Indian nations, would carry the Bible along with them. How could they well avoid it, and, at the fame time, throw the holy mantle of hypocrify over their fecularity and ambition. But along with this divine Book, the Book of life, light and knowledge, they would prefent *fo many* other enrollments of divine truth, *fo many* refcripts of fundamental Articles, *fo many Vade-mecum's* of eternal life and manuals of falvation, that truly THE BIBLE fhould be afhamed to appear before them in its plain munditial exterior, but plainer INSIDE ; furely no lefs aukward and embaraffed than if one of our Saviour's FISHERMEN, had fuddenly bolted into the prefence of a king.

The Jews themfelves in a rapturous ftart of admiration, wanted, *per vim manuum*, to make Jefus Chrift a king. I fuppofe while the king-making paroxysm lafted, they would have granted him the enfigns of royalty ; but *our* admiring JEWS, I mean Chriftians, would fet IMMANUEL on the thrones of princes, and emperors, even in his native difhabille, his *simplex mundities*, his fandals and his feamlefs doublet.—While yet living with his Difciples, and making their *very hearts burn within them*, he utterly rejected the *regal violence* (no doubt, kindly) intended him : but it was impoffible his Servants, that is, HIS SUCCESSORS IN THE CHAIR OF INSPIRATION, could overlook an inftance of extreme felf-denial
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so signal and exemplary. Impossible.—After their LORD's death and ascension into Heaven, they invested him, for his humility, with ample SECULAR SOVEREIGNTY. That they did it not before the beginning of the fourth Century, must be accounted for from a portion yet remaining among his Followers of his own peculiar spirit, his characteristic contempt of the world, his unaffected modesty and self-denial.

The Society *De Propaganda Fide*, among the Indians, may much more aptly be styled, the Society *De Fide NON propaganda*. Any that are made, are not Converts to Christianity, as taught by Christ and his Apostles, but Converts to the Church of England. The Church of Christ, and the Church as constituted in England, are as much opposite to each other, as Christ is to Belial; the world of saints, the other world, to the world of sinners, this present world. The latter goes as a sturdy beggar, a haughty high-allied Mendicant, among Indian nations. "Give me," is still the burden of her prayer, "large endowments and pecuniary emoluments, give me negatives in the supreme Meetings of your tribes, and I will teach you OUR way of going to Heaven." Did an Indian reply by asking the following question "Is your way better or shorter than our's?" Adding, "We are sure, when war, labour, exercise, shall have put an end to our lives, shall lay us by our friends under the little green hillock, with our bow and our arrow, we are sure of going to our fathers and brethren, who just lived as we live, and just died as we shall die, beyond yon sky-topt mountain, beyond yon purple cloud." What would be the purport of a rejoinder? I am afraid, if yet a blush loiters on the cheek of Establishment, like a swallow behind the rest, when the genial temperature of summer is gone, that silence, emphatic, abashed silence would be the whole amount.—Surely, it must be confessed, that in proportion as Political Establishments of Religion would diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel among Indian nations, in proportion would they give these very People just cause to despise both it and those that propagated it; when they saw (every Indian has two eyes) *that* blessed Gospel made only a sort of

speculum, to spy out where their golden sands, their golden mines, their rocks of diamonds lie; a kind of consecrated lamp to lead their *Reforming* steps to the richest bullion, the brightest gem.—No doubt, in the way of traffic, Indians should be presented with riches and treasures in abundance for all these—beyond the grave. *Where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt* (Blessed place!) and *where thieves* (holy thieves—blessed security!) *do not break through nor steal*.—To be sure the very first thing with our Missionaries should be to present the BIBLE as a peace-offering from the skies, a mine of inexhaustible wealth: and of course Indians should naturally be told, nay MADE to believe, how trifling how insignificant, in comparison with it—the tooth of ivory, the beaver's skin, the balsam, the Cortex, nay the beauteous fleece of ermin itself.

It is memorable enough, that Sherlock, Bishop of London, presented a memorial to the Sovereign, with relation to a plan he had suggested of settling Bishops in America. The worthy Prelate, it would appear, was not sufficed with so considerable a portion of the wealth and property of the British Empire, already within the attraction of the Episcopate: he cast a magnetic glance cros the Atlantic, to try what wealth might be attracted *there*, attracted to its proper centre, the Episcopal Poles of the world.—His design miscarried, notwithstanding, no doubt, the utmost solidity of reasoning and weight of argument—*pro jure divino Ecclesiæ*. The prudence of Majesty, and the sagacity of the State interposed.—How disgraceful to *Episcopacy*, that all her lessons of good sense, moderation, discretion and humility, come from a quarter, a set of people whom, by a profusion of riches and honours, she is hired to teach and inform, the LAITY! The history of all ages, since Christianity was transferred from CHRIST to Bishops, bears uniform united testimony to the truth of this remark. It were well for her, in such instances, she could make out her property in the following text. *The Children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. The Priests' lips "we are told" shall preserve knowledge, and the People shall seek it at their mouths.*

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This might have been the case with Priests of old, and certainly was, while God immediately instructed them himself : but I fear with regard to modern Priests (Bishops) we must go along the verse by the retrograde motion, and say (would to God it could not be said!) *The Court's lips shall preserve knowledge, and the PRIESTHOOD shall seek it at its mouth.*

I neither claim the merit of extraordinary foresight, nor do I affect the reputation of a Prophet; yet methinks I could muster up presumptions almost amounting to moral certainty, that there never can be an Establishment of Bishops in any place where it hitherto has not been; in short, any where out of the precise *natale solum* of Popery and Protestant Episcopacy. The reasons are as obviously strong against it now, as the circumstances of old were in its favour: in the latter instance darkness, barbarity and ignorance; in the former, light, knowledge and refinement: in the one, a remissness or incapacity to form liberal accurate ideas of personal liberty and private judgment; blind, implicit credulity, and devoted superstitious reverence for spiritual Rulers, instead of every man being his own spiritual Ruler: in the other, aptitude and singular ability, to ascertain, justly and clearly, what belongs to the Individual, both by natural and Christian derivation; a well informed regulated diffidence with regard to all positions and claims of right advanced by others; and a guarded discreet veneration for Church Rulers and Governors, just as they appear to deserve it, by being men of integrity, erudition, candor, sentiment and moderation. These characteristics (by no means highly emblazoned) of the Present Times, form insuperable bars in the way of new Political Establishments of Religion. Bishops and the Governors of the Hierarchy, must command yonder sun to traverse back many cycles in the Zodiac, must whirl us backward some Centuries in the vortex of time, before they can possibly convince the enlightened Christian, the Scholar, the Philosopher of the *present age*, that *their Order*, however renowned in Ecclesiastical annals, is either necessary, expedient, or **LAWFUL** in the Christian Church: a species of domination, as repugnant to the

Precepts of the Gospel of Jesus, *the meek and lowly Jesus*, as directly obstructive of its avowed tendency, to render us superior to the world, and magnanimous in adversity, the true school of CHRIST.—To assimilate our minds to the nature and enjoyments of another world, by immediately and immoderately participating with us in some of the highest distinctions and daintiest pleasures of this Life, is an enterprize, a paradox, that could only enter into a PRELATE's thoughts.

Particularly, with respect to America, the Scheme would be its own enemy, that is, it would officiously discover to all its own nakedness and imbecility. The Americans, on several recent and critical occasions, have discovered a spirit of independence, a deep and perceptive insight into the sacred and inestimable Rights of mankind, with a steady persevering boldness in their defence, that will always stand as so many mighty flood-marks, so many barriers of more than rock and adamant, against the noisy and restless waves of sacerdotal ambition and ecclesiastical encroachment. The plea of a more convenient local ordination is a weak one. He that would undertake to defend Episcopal Ordination, in exclusion of all other, at this day, as of Divine Institution, by a scarce perceptible advance of the same *rationale*, might effectually prove the Pope's claim of Supremacy and Infallibility to be likewise Divine. In America, therefore, the ministers of the Church of England may ORDAIN one another: the same Spiritual Authority that invests a Bishop with the Privilege, invests his CURATE.—The People of America, I believe, have no objection, in general, to the English Church, but on the ground of her claiming external jurisdiction and authority; in consequence of which they should be restrained and disturbed in worshipping God in their *own way*, and in forming conceptions of his Nature, and of his Religion, according to the light and evidence of their own minds: than which nothing could more directly tend to unpoise their general scale of happiness, more effectually imbitter their quiet, sentimental enjoyment of life. Their Bible they love, and would endeavour to understand and obey

obey it : but *Canons, Articles, Creeds, and Homilies* follow the Episcopate wherever it goes, as shadows attend on Light, and nightly damps on a day of sunshine. These are stuffed with so many coercive restraints and embarrassments, so many Doctrines, that hover round the Head in mists and darkness, without ever once touching the Heart with sensibility, although to touch the Heart with sensibility, should seem the sole aim of Christianity ; they bring with them so many Ritual incumbrances and ceremonial fopperies, that no man, no Christian, could or would submit to them, who has not already been USED TO THEM, as he is to the fashion of his clothes, or the cock of his beaver.

Perhaps there never was a more outrageous blunder committed, even in Polemicks, the meridian of blunders, than the attempt to fix a standard of Revelation, *the ne plus ultra, the hitherto shalt thou come and no farther* ; as if Revelation was neither more nor less than the boisterous and tumultuous ocean, ready to forsake its accustomed boundaries, and to deluge us in its fury, were it not for the omnific reprimand of our egregious Divines.—To bring the immensity of the sun's light and heat within the focus of a speculum, or to dance the lightning of the clouds on the point of a cobbler's awl, would be somewhat within the line of Common Sense: but to bring down the Eternal Majesty of Heaven, the Creator of the Universe, the infinite Mind, the unchangeable Jehovah, to sit undeified and vacated of himself, within a little a-b-c-darian scroll of parchment, authenticated by the names of certain of his Creatures, to be his fit, proper, nay, his only abode, and there to utter barbarous logic, and rhyme over metaphysical libels on HIMSELF—What shall I call it ? Language labours, but labours in vain, to represent it in terms abhorrent and indignant enough !—Our Saviour says, *it must needs be that offences come ; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh !* To substitute Church here, in place of the term man, would be just and fair ; as every Established Church acts as one man, nor can assume any plea, privilege, or sanction, in behalf of her decisions and decrees, other than what every single Individual may assume. Every sincere, honest Believer
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in the Gospel is, in his own proper person, a living miniature of the Christian Church, perfect in every necessary requisite enjoined by Jesus Christ; where Reason and the Understanding are the only High Priests; the Passions, Appetites and Affections, the only objects, *in diffuso*, under spiritual jurisdiction. A multitude of such Churches is still but the one same Church, self-dependant and self-regulated; as man is neither more nor less than man, though increased to a million. The Scripture sentiment is more express and concise. *Ye are the Temple of God.*

A matter so interesting to all Christians, as this certainly is, cannot be held forth in lights too striking, in colours too glowing. Should we estimate the offence and damage done to Christianity by the peculiar genius of Religious Establishments, the genius of RE-INSPIRING the Scriptures, we should swell the hideous account with the dark designs, the horrid machinations and bloody misdeeds of ten deformed Centuries, as shocking to imagination upon review, as desolating to mankind in their execution!—Wandering through this gloomy succession of benighted Ages, through the deep-winding mazes of inextricable wickedness, the Acherantic paths of sacerdotal villainy; how should we direct our steps, with all the caution of avoidance, without plunging into torrents of human blood! without having our course interrupted by mountains of slain! without being deafened to stupification by the groans, the piercing lamentations of cities and kingdoms! the dying and dead in a state of being envied, compared with that of the living! *Rachel weeping for her children because they are not!*

True, Christ, the wisdom of God, expressly foretold these OFFENCES should happen; but wo to those persons, those Religious Establishments, by whose intolerance, covetousness and ambition they DID and DO happen! Happy, thrice happy for all such, had they never been born, had they never existed! Happy for all such, had they, with mill-stones round their necks, been drowned in the depths of the Sea!—No one conversant with Ecclesiastical History (a diabolical sanguinary series of facts) commencing with Constantine, and ending with our
Charleses,

Charleses, not to bring it lower, can, in any consistency with that knowledge, call our Saviour's remarkable words of Prophecy either forced or hyperbolical. These are his words. *The brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. Then you shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing where it ought not. For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the Creation, unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the Elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened those days.*

With a deep, settled, serious attention to these never to be forgotten Sayings of our blessed Lord, of which *no jot nor tittle shall ever fail, till all be fulfilled*; it is to me inconceivable, how the Heads and Governors of the Church can sit down in the silent admiring contemplation of *that Authority*, which was at first absolutely established by those very tribulations and afflictions, *that abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, and standing where it ought not?* The truth and dignity of the Historic Page incontestably support this grievous and affecting charge; should call every blush to the assistance of *State-Protestantism* Ingenuity hath in store!—The Church of Rome is her Parent and Prototype; to fix and consolidate the pillars of her avowed spiritual Tyranny, was the beginning of sorrows, the actual fulfilment of these long-ago predicted calamities. When she broke off from Rome, to save the scoff and banter of Posterity, she abandoned, although with great reluctance, a few of her ostensible Principles, but she retained, and in a new outside, somewhat more seemly and decent, the root and foundation of all, the most fatal and glaring of all Popish absurdities, the sentiment of subsisting and keeping together by the POWERS OF THIS WORLD. Had this monstrous sentiment never started, *ab infero*, into the human mind, Rome had never been what she now is: were it now relinquished, or rendered unoperative, by the falling off of her supports, the crowned heads of Europe, all her other abominable corruptions and idolatries should instantly melt away like dew upon the grass.

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Capital errors and absurdities will for ever start up in some strangely-conditioned, some very accentric human minds; but they should never have stability and currency, for lustrums and for ages, without the effectual interference of external compulsive power. Notwithstanding many minds may and do strike off from the path of sound Reason, and accurate Philosophy, into the serpentine obliquities of learned folly, a mere terræ-filial race of geniusses; yet more minds incomparably will always be found acted upon from above, the cœli-filial lights of inspiration, to preserve this path, at all times of critical moment, sufficiently illuminated and patulent.—But if the uncourteous and ungracious Sons of force, of bodily coercion, advance with the strut and stride of authority, to block up this divine path, and afterwards station themselves there with the frown and insult of hireling centinels; what will avail the feeble uninforced remonstrances of Genius, of Learning, of Virtue, nay of Religion herself? though the stars not too distant for their researches, nor the comet itself, even when he enters on his *tramet of darkness!* though the intuition of Heaven sits on the sweetness of their lips, or rolls in the fire of their eyes; and immortality deeply imprints every step they take in the road of Reformation! What then? the unwieldy and unanimated ministers of power, know them not from the letterless rabble around them, more than Jupiter's belt from the sparkles of a falling star, or the motion of the planets from the motion of themselves in a wheel-barrow!—Alas! we might excuse all orders of men, all incorporations of the people, for attaching themselves to the ignoble arm of flesh, the degrading interposition of civil authority: but for the ministers of Heaven, the Disciples of Jesus Christ, the Teachers of a Revelation directly from God, the professed Agents of his Providence, to adopt so poor a medium of help, so humiliating an alliance—what shall I call it? a term sufficient to express their demerit and guilt, would add a new stamp of energy to our language.

Had we not too much pride to attend to the common nature and course of things, to exert that degree of ordinary

nary sagacity in spiritual matters which, in temporal, we deem necessary, nay highly praise-worthy ; we could not avoid being struck with the unaccountable blunder of supposing, that Almighty God is not abundantly capable and willing to protect and push forward his own peculiar Cause, independant of our puny and wretched interference. Yet, undoubtedly, this palpable blunder first gave being to all our Establishments, and continues them in cumberous awkward existence, however repugnant to Common Sense, and the first Principles of Christianity. Had all the copies of the Bible been irrecoverably lost, by some unforeseen, some fatal catastrophe, and nothing remained extant but their sorry abstracts and abridgments, Creeds and Confessions ; our national Churches should have had some colour of expedience and necessity for inculcating the use and reception of them among Christians ; although even then, wise and thinking men, assisted by a happy memory, and living traditory documents, might have clapt their finger upon many Doctrines, in these truly apocryphal writings, utterly impossible to have been contained in the Scriptures of truth : but rather than not have the sun at all, mankind, naturally, when left to themselves, fond of light, would be pleased with his blessed and benign countenance, even peeping through the horrors of the cloudiest sky and blackest atmosphere. As the scene however is quite the reverse, as we are at once solaced by his brightness, and comforted by his heat, without any veil or shadow between us ; surely we would not prefer to him any the smallest approach to darkness. Without a metaphor, when we have the Scriptures in their first original edition, thrown off in Heaven, and presented to us by the hand of Jesus Christ himself ; shall we with equal folly and obstinacy continue year after year, and age after age, the consecrated use of a pirated, a spurious copy ?

The Church plumes herself upon the pride-begotten persuasion of her being the great conservator and repository of the Christian Religion ; the mighty venerable Ark, where the Gospel of Christ reposes in perfect spotlessness and security. The Jews, with regard to their external religious constitution, strikingly analogous to our national

national Establishments, had the same arrogant and flattering idea of themselves. But to what were their fastidious boasts and presumption reduced? To a breath of wind, whistling in derision over the tomb-stones of their departed glory!—But it may be insinuated here, I am sure ten thousand mouths are ready to insinuate it, that the Jewish and Christian Dispensations are very different. Respecting the observatory law of Rites and Ceremonies they differ *toto cælo*; respecting Virtue or moral obligation they are one and the same. Our Saviour's own declaration is decisive. *Think not I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to FULFIL.* What was it then he came to destroy? Surely something once esteemed essential to the Jewish Church. The Ritual Ceremonial form of Religion, the exterior showy exhibition of it, in her Temple and Synagogues. To this very form St. Paul alludes. *For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before* (preceding the appearance of Christ) *for the WEAKNESS and UNPROFITABLENESS thereof. For the Law made nothing perfect.* Now, modern Religious Establishments being, so far as they are exhibitory and ceremonial, the exact renovation of this Law, they must of course, and to all intents and purposes, be *weak, unprofitable, and imperfect*; and are therefore, *ipso facto*, along with the Jewish Hierarchy, abrogated, disannulled, and absolutely prohibited, to the end of time.

How outward incorporations of Religion, richly and glaringly endowed, expressly reprobated and forbidden by Almighty God, by the mouths of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, should, notwithstanding, be pitched upon and considered, as the conservators and repositories of the Gospel, to me is all inexplicable mystery, absolute contradiction, unless as being the living conservators and repositories of their own condemnation. In this sense, we will allow their plea, and perhaps admire their honesty; at the same time that we are constrained to consider them so far Antichrist, as they would keep up that artificial outside, that unsubstantial semblance, that ostentatious mummary of Religion, which Jesus Christ came positively to disannul and destroy. Hereby they have, in effect,

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effect, either superceded the necessity, or annihilated the efficacy of his death, and brought us back to the Jewish Temple, to worship with the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees. This is surely *to oppose and exalt themselves above every thing that is called God*; and consequently to realize the true character of Antichrist. If National Establishments of Religion be right, then is the New Testament wrong. In vain did God send his own Son into the world, except to mock and deceive us, if we are again to bow our necks to Established yokes and burdens, equally as grievous and intolerable as were those of the Jews. If so, in the following declaration, among a multitude of others to the same purpose, Jesus Christ publicly stained his honour as the messenger of TRUTH, and told a downright FALSEHOOD to the wide and credulous world. *Whom the Son maketh free, they are free* INDEED. *Take my yoke upon you; for MY yoke is easy, and MY burden is light.* Here then we come to a *ne plus ultra*, to a dilemma of the most urgent and critical nature. Whether we shall believe God or man. Believe Jesus Christ himself, or his atrocious RIVAL in Dominion, Antichrist. The Gordian knot need not be cut; it is easily untied—*Let GOD be true, and all men liars.*

The above juxta-position of claims will serve to give us a short but just idea of the Visible, opposed to the Invisible Church; the Gospel of Jesus Christ opposed to the *weak, unprofitable, and imperfect* Law of Rites and Ceremonies, among the Jews; of which virtually, though not in modification, those of our modern State-baptized Churches are a notorious transcript. When I behold a CERTAIN Church contending for her authority to decree Rites and Ceremonies, I am struck in every nerve of astonishment at her infatuated spirit, contending, *in totidem verbis*, for an authority to become and continue UNLIKE the Church of Christ, as constituted and defined by himself; which he assures us, is within us, in spirit and in truth, instead of being without us, in Rites and Ceremonies. *The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: behold, the Kingdom of God is within you. Ye are the Temple of God: the Temple of God is holy,*

holy, which Temple ye are. But when I reflect on this redoubted identical Church styling herself, in all the loftiness of claim, the repository, as well as protectress of true Religion; I cannot help representing her to myself, as an emmit taking a giant on his back, in order to protect him from the assaults of his enemies, a spider covering him with its web in the field of battle; or, at other times, as a snail stepping forth from its vacated shell, and presenting it with all the formality of invitation to a radiant Angel just alighted from the skies.—A Church that cannot, with respect to her spirit, her morals, her manners, protect herself, even in the hands of her best friends and ablest advocates, from the weakest attacks of observing contemplative men, of free enquiry and honest ridicule; such a Church, I say, stepping forth as the Guardian of that Religion which neither requires nor solicits any upon Earth, without even the ingenuous merit of irony against herself, naturally brings to one's eye a squadron of heroic grasshoppers, a battle-array of mighty frogs, undertaking the injured Cause of the Elephants.

But we have two National, and what is more, Reformed Churches; each of which steps before the other in priority and authenticity of claim, as the true, nay the only Repository of the Christian Religion. Here are two very venerable Matrons, of high antiquity, grave aspect and majestic tread, each of whom presents you with her STRONG BOX, her *Holy of Holies*, which she assures you contains every thing requisite to insure your salvation; in other words, contains no less a treasure than Truth in all her fulness of inspiration. Alas! here are two Boxes, with two different keys: the key of the one will not open the lock of the other, consequently, we have *two* Salvations, *two* Inspirations. The ward of the one key, of highly burnished gold, is made up of the following hieroglyphical Capitals, EPISCOPALIAN ORDINATION: the ward of the other, neither so rich in its metal, nor yet so high, in its polish, of these, PRESBYTERIAN ORDINATION. Both of these keys, we are positively told, however unlike each other, will assuredly open HEAVEN. Now, Heaven must either have two doors,

doors, with an opposing crowd rushing in at each ; or one of these celebrated keys must be a counterfeit. But to determine which is the counterfeit, will require a degree of critical acumen, nay a degree of actual Inspiration, unknown to mankind since the days of the Apostles : so that this distress, this difficulty plunges us in the same precise situation we should be in at this moment, supposing neither of these Churches in being, or both keys irrecoverably lost ; that is, we shall be obliged to depend upon ourselves, independent of every human, and of course, every fallible standard. In favour of both the above national keys of Scripture, we have a formal Act of Parliament, by a sort of patent-right authorising them to lock and unlock Inspiration, as well as Heaven : therefore, one of our very respectable MATRONS, the exclusive Proprietors of these wonderful keys, must *bona fide* be a HARLOT, bewitching the nations by her force-ries, and scattering her nostrums among the ignorant credulous multitude, to over-reach and deceive them. If any should alledge that, if one be a Harlot, both must be Harlots, as both have the very same pretensions, the same fair plausible outside, the same marks of credibility, and the same license from the State, to vend their Corporation privileges and immunities, I have no authority either to disprove or contradict them.

In reality, two disagreeing Churches pretending, each respectively, to be the true Church, is neither more nor less than erecting a mask-battery constantly in play to demolish and overthrow each other. Without a plea of Infallibility, neither can pretend to stand her ground ; for if the legitimacy and excellence of the one above the other have only human traditionary proof, or verbal asseveration in her favour, the degree of evidence in the result can have no greater weight, than that of two point blank contradictory witnesses before a court of judicature ; one of them we must unavoidably suppose suborned and perjured. The Churches in question do not declare according to their knowledge, in their depositions at the supreme bar of the public ; but that the fact absolutely is so : one, therefore, must of necessity be wrong ; but the self-same circumstances that render one suspicious, render

render both suspicious; so that both are wrong, or neither. The issue then must plainly be, the admission of the plea of Infallibility: but this Plea set, and continues the Pope on his throne, the avowed Scriptural Antichrist; so that every thing sacredly dear and valuable to a Christian Church is totally relinquished and lost by this Plea; superadded to the mortification of giving Popery that signal palm of merit, justly acquired by her preserving the idea of *Unity* in her Infallible Plea: whereas, among Reformed Protestants, there are two great National uncorresponding Pleas of Infallibility, equally strong and well-supported: which, doubtless, are no less monstrously absurd than *two* Gods, *two* Jesus Christs, or *two* Bibles.

The moderate coalescing Abettors of both Churches would fondly persuade us, as they perfectly agree in the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, and only differ in the *mere* points of Ordination and Church Authority, that in strictness of sentiment they are but one. *Nihil tam prope, tam proculque*. But I am so thoroughly of a different mind, in this particular, that I would reverse the whole idea, and consider what are called fundamental Doctrines as the superstructure only, but ordination and Church Authority, literally the foundation. The exclusive Power of ordination must be the very center pillar of any Church; for without it she could not perpetuate herself, but come to an end, like all other corruptible temporary bodies. Church Authority, indeed, is nothing else but this Power established. Let but the Church's charter right of corporate existence be traced up clearly and legibly to a Divine Original, every thing is at once effected, the most capacious ambition of the Priesthood would aspire to. Nothing can be supposed sacred or binding beyond a Divine Original. It is the basis, and the only basis of Ecclesiastical Authority, Doctrines and Decrees whatever. On the contrary, when this primordial Right cannot be carried upwards to Almighty God, by obvious and undeniable steps of progression, cannot be ascertained in the same happy incontestable manner, by which other matters of right and succession are usually ascertained; the Church in this very critical dilemma, whether of Rome, England or

Scotland,

Scotland, it matters not, is *no Church* ; that is, she is a self-erected, self-perpetuated Church ; in her constitution totally unconnected with God and his Son, Jesus Christ. In this unfortunate predicament, *all her Decrees, all her Doctrines*, must be like herself, of human oral authority ; classing no higher than the regulations and by-laws of any private secular Body or Corporation ; and no otherwise binding than in a local stationary sense. The Church of Scotland arrogates the Right of Ordination solely to herself ; the Church of England decries and vilifies this assumed Right of her sister Establishment. This disagreement proves to a demonstration, that the Right in question has not been and cannot be ascertained ; and if not ascertained to the entire conviction of Reason and the Understanding, it becomes a problematical, a nugatory Right : Consequently, those many Doctrines that have been embodied and inculcated on the People, under the sanction of this right, are no more to be considered as truly sterling, as invariably obligatory, than any other Maxims or Precepts coined in the mint of human wisdom and sagacity ; that become, so soon as the legal stamp is effaced, interrupted and suspicious in their circulation.

The event, the state of the fact, at this day, gives a singular air of truth and energy to the above remarks. What we are taught by our learned Divines to consider as Doctrines essential to Christianity ? when they come to be demonstrated and explained by these very Divines, what are they ? why, they are this, they are that, they are nothing, or they are every thing. They write about them and about them, till indeed all their paper is written, but scarce one happy idea, one blessed surmise of common Intelligence, meets the reader's eye, or strikes on his understanding. Are such the Essentials of Religion ? they are of *that* Religion which has neither top nor tail, which, in truth, all Religions, framed and retailed out by men, generally are. The writers upon the thirty-nine Articles have left behind them everlasting Satires on themselves, by the egregious attempt of washing the African white, and brushing off the Panther's spots. The Articles are absurd and contradictory ; but *they* have made them

them ten times more absurd and contradictory; out-clattering the jackdaw, out-croaking the raven. The essentials of Religion are as obvious as the sun at noon day: who would require a smoked glass to walk by his light, or to be convinced he is shining? none but Churchmen, who believe every thing but what they see. Christen what you will a mystery, immediately will they ingurgitate it down the way-giving throat of Orthodoxy, with the same lubricious facility a good fat Living generally goes down; call it an object of common sense, it is positively no Doctrine of *theirs*; for where is the merit of believing what we *must* believe, whether we will or no? and what is Religion without its high Calvinistical ally, Faith? Nothing better, surely, than the Religion of a St. Matthew, or a St. Mark, who, each of them in his Gospel, (surely they were not inspired at the time) have in the very rankest spirit of heterodoxy commanded that, *Whoso readeth, let him understand*. Nay, nothing better than the Religion of Jesus Christ himself, that Arch-heretic, who, in the following pert interrogation has *almost* done what he could to destroy all Establishments whatsoever, *Nay, why even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?*

We readily allow, that what are named the Orthodox Doctrines, and generally understood as such, are the same both in England and Scotland. What is the inference? Do these indeed constitute the true Church of God as established by his Son Jesus Christ? Then is the Church of Rome also the true Church of God, for she has consecrated and patronizes the very same Doctrines; nay, she is the original parent of them, and her two backsliding DAUGHTERS only the adopters or retailers of them. True, the Romish Church has many and material *addenda* to these: and so likewise have the Anglican and Caledonian Hierarchies. Oh, but those of the *former* are monstrous and horrid, which surely cannot be justly said with regard to those of the *latter*. Let them be named. Why, Idolatry, and the enormous claim of Infallibility, whence arise so many fatal and destructive consequences to the peace and happiness of Society. But are our renowned Protestant Churches altogether

altogether innocent of these charges, when they have taken *INSPIRATION* into their own hands, and modelled it anew to their minds; and have thus set themselves down *in the Temple of God, exalting themselves above every thing that is called God*. What is this, if not Idolatry, and the worst species of it too, Self-idolatry before the People; from whom they have silent deferential assent and consent; which should seem to require but a small addition from the *mere formality* of bowing the knee. Farther, this new-modelled form of Inspiration, this corrected and enlarged Edition of the Sacred Text, this School-imprimatured Bible, they have so barricadoed and hedged round with prohibitions and *noli-me-tangi's*, nay, with the meanest of all protections, An Act of Parliament, that we must not presume to doubt or alter one paragraph, sentence or syllable of the whole. Nor is this wonderful circumstance left to the most solemn injunctions and admonitions; but we must awfully swear before Almighty God, and leave the security of our names behind us, neither to doubt nor to alter one jot or tittle: thus becoming Christians, not from inward light and knowledge, which are progressive, and not to be unalterably fixt at the moment, like a spark of electrical fire on the point of a needle; but, as certain respectable Personages become robbers and free-booters, by an act of adjuration to each other.—That freedom our law-giving Churches use without hesitation, even the length of rudeness and insolence, with the immaculate Word of God, they authoritatively interdict us the use of, in reading their anti-canonical conceits, their apocryphal reveries. What is all this, when the righteous verdict of Common Sense and Common Honesty is returned, but the highest appropriation of *INFALLIBILITY*, even beyond that assumed by the Writers of the New Testament themselves; who on several occasions assure us, they write only as men; in the most feeling manner express their liableness to error, mistake and misapprehension; in the most candid generous style, repeatedly disclaim all dominion over the Faith and Consciences of Christians: nay, what is still more signally characteristic of these truly divine Teachers, they submit their pretensions, and the truth of their Doctrines, to be tried at the

bar of Private Judgment, constituting all impartial Readers at large, throughout the world and to the end of time, final and qualified Judges.

From this approximation of pictures, that of our two Established Churches, and that of the Writers of the New Testament compared together, it immediately appears, that the former put in for and absolutely assert **CLAIMS**, beyond those of the latter; which Claims, by fair and not over-strained deduction, amount to the enormous charge of **IDOLATRY** and assumed **INFALLIBILITY**. If Christ and his Apostles submit themselves, which they certainly do, to the upright tribunal of Human Understanding, submit the evidence of their Mission and Characters to be weighed in the righteous balance of **REASON**; what shall we think of a set of demure, begrimed Pedants, a junto of bewildered, blundering Demagogues, only **INSPIRED** by their prejudices, their passions, their mutual animosities, some of them perhaps once strutting in Rochets and Archbishopal robes, who have put the whole Christian world under the severest restrictions, **NOT** to dispute their authority, or suspect the excellence of their decisions, in the most trivial instance. Even men of consummate talents, learning, virtues, are comprehended in these unmanly, illiberal and arbitrary restrictions. There is something in this Contrast between God and the Clergy, that ought to strike us with the most ineffable contempt, the most sovereign distaste of the latter—A glow-worm creeping forth from the decayed roots of an old tree, and solacing itself in the glorious thought, how little, how pitiful, in comparison with itself, the refulgent meridian sun!—Our divine Saviour says, *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.* Our Churches in their legislative capacity declare, on the contrary, *If we bear NOT witness of ourselves, our witness is not true.* Their Lord and Master also thus addresses the multitude around him. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.* How much the reverse of his pretended servants! They will not allow either the Doers or the works done to be judged: we must, even upon oath, believe them without daring

daring to judge of them. The reason for it is more obvious, than their truth, their integrity. Should we judge of them by their works, we should judge of them as the Jews falsely and maliciously judged of Jesus Christ, that HE HAD A DEVIL.

The writer's want of deference and *accustomed* respect for our two celebrated Church Establishments, will, I well know, be severely found fault with by a variety of persons connected with these Establishments. As Civil Institutions merely, I love and respect them, because I sincerely love and respect the authority and laws of my Country: but as *spiritual Lordships over the Heritage of God*, as unjust tyrannical Stewards in the Household of God, as avowed public Incorporations, exercising dominion over the faith of Christians; I owe them no respect, no love, no veneration. They require and expect them, not as points of fashionable good breeding and ceremonial courtesy, else they should have them; but they *demand* and *urge* them as acknowledgments of our humble duty and submission to them, as our spiritual Dictators and Tax-masters. He however, whom the New Testament declares our only Head, our only Legislator, has positively discountenanced all such acknowledgments. *You cannot serve two Masters: you cannot serve God and Mammon. He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* Here the closest and tenderest connections of life are, at no time, to come into competition with our attachment and affection to Jesus Christ; much less, surely, the expected returns of regulated compliment. They have in the universal ear of mankind, formally denied their Lord and Master, by substituting *their* Authority in place of his, and setting up *this* Authority above human Scrutiny and trial, which he never did with respect to his own. *Believe me for the very work's sake. Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of me.*—This injured denied authority would I endeavour to defend; struck with these awful words, which should strike to the quick every law-giving Assembly of Divines, every prescribing and proscribing ecclesiastical Court, wherever, or by whomsoever called together; *Whosoever will* CONFESS

me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven: but whosoever shall DENY me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven. To confess his Supreme Authority in the Church, is to confess *himself*: and to deny it, is to deny *himself*. The latter all Established Churches notoriously have done, and without blushing: *they have made the Commandments of God of none effect by their traditions. They draw nigh to him with their lips, but their hearts are far from him. They pay the tithe of mint, anise and cummin, but neglect the weightier matters of the Law.* They would call upon Jesus Christ, *Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name (taught publicly) and in thy name done many wonderful works.* Brought whole mighty nations to acknowledge, and gloriously to celebrate thy Messiah-ship and Supremacy, IN US. How solemn, how alarming the reply. *Verily I say unto you, I know ye not; depart from me ye that work iniquity.* The Protestant and Reformed Boasts of such Churches, for ever and ever dunned into our ears, may very emphatically be alluded to in the expression, *and in thy name done many wonderful works.* Wonderful works indeed, that translated the Pope from Rome, and set him in all his plenitudinary power, though not in all his Pontifical Regalia, in the English Convocation, and Scottish General Assembly of Divines! I am sure if they disclaim the merit of having translated him thither, it will only be to assume a greater in its stead; that of having actually CREATED him in each place.

Let Reformation her proud boasts forego,
 She shrined the HEAD, when she forsook the toe.
 Let all Establishments hang down their head,
 Dethroning Popes, they thron'd THEMSELVES instead.

On this occasion I always remember St. PETER's remarkable words. *It had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness (the Gospel of Christ) than after they had known it, to turn from the holy Commandment (the Scriptures of Truth) delivered unto them.*

For

For a Church, constituted and subsisting directly contrary to the repeated commands and ordinances of Jesus Christ, to be, at the same time, the Receptacle and vehicle of his pure and holy Gospel, is a paradox uncommonly extravagant. She can surely be no otherwise allied to Jesus Christ than Judas was, because he carried the bag; officially screened under which, he had leisure and opportunity, unattended to and unsuspected, to conceive and digest his base and ungrateful scheme of delivering up his Master into the hands of robbers and murderers. Jesus Christ, indeed, cannot a second time be lawlessly condemned, and crucified on the ignominious tree. He is now in his state of glorious exaltation, far beyond the machinations of men and devils; so that, whatever insults and injuries he now meets with, they must all, thanks to Almighty God, fall short of that wicked barbarous treatment he, though the most perfect innocence, met with from the Jews: yet every Church may be said to deliver him afresh into the hands of his enemies, to betray his Person and Character, who, from the incongruous absurd situations and aspects they put his invisible Government, his sentimental Kingdom in, unavoidably expose it to the lash of Satire, the jeer of Ridicule, and the contempt of Infidelity. The exhibition of his Kingdom in the Scriptures, and that which presents itself in all Establishments, seem as diametrically opposite to each other, as the East is to the West, Day to Night.—Here then is a pause, a crisis of suspense, a *rock of stumbling, and an occasion of offence*, almost impossible to be got over, by learned, ingenuous, inquisitive men: the dilemma is either, to doubt the excellence and divine original of the Scriptures, or totally to discredit whole national bodies of Divines, the immense aggregate of the established Clergy. These, to a man, with confidence, steadiness, and extreme pertinacity, assume the air and countenance of the Ministers of Heaven, the Priests of the Most High God, the mouths of his holy Oracles, and the Dispensers of spiritual ordinances: yet their mode and manner of acting, in these sublime and venerable offices, their usual appearance, character, and conversation in the world, are in general, quite inconsistent

consistent with the Scriptural idea and representation of these. How then shall intelligent, acute and enquiring men act in this case? the alternative is truly embarrassing and distressing; either to disbelieve the literal obvious word of God, or disbelieve *our* incorporated Clergy, one and all of them. No doubt, once they are rationally convinced, and rationally convinced they must be, before they can believe, that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, the difficulty of the alternative immediately vanishes; they certainly will give credit to Inspiration at all events, and will discredit the Clergy, in the face even of ceremonial respect, and long established punctilio. There is a duty and veneration due to Truth, whether in the investigation, or consequent conviction, paramount, indisputably, to all other duties and objects of veneration whatsoever. But then, there is a series of laborious research of slow critical disquisition necessary, previous to the happy, settled belief of the Bible being the Word of God, that the listless damp of intimidation seizes, relaxes learned *Laymen* all over; chiefly, as they have infinite literary objects before them of other kinds, more congenial with their tempers, and more immediately gratifying to present ambition: they therefore take all such matters, interesting and important as they are, implicitly upon trust, upon the naked word of Churchmen, as contained in Creeds and Confessions; they have not time, inclination or patience to compare these with Scripture, a work legally assumed and monopolized by the Clergy, therefore, not *properly* their business; whence, by a transition not unnatural to men of quick parts and lively imaginations, they soon reach the unhappy length of *doubting* the one, and *despising* the other: these beloved and highly cherished sentiments incessantly quivering on their tongues, and dropping from their pens. *Anima mea sit cum PHILOSOPHIS. Errare meberculè malo cum PLATONE, quam cum ISTIS vero sentire.*

I have been long convinced, and the more I consider the subject, my convictions grow the stronger, that Infidelity properly so called, with respect to religious objects, has always been owing to the professed Teachers of Religion, the Clergy. I think it can be demonstrated, they

they have, from time to time, done more irreparable harm in this particular (to be sure, not just intended) than they have done any essential good otherwise. It will immediately be thrown in the teeth of the writer, what, the Clergy the cause of Infidelity, that have, many of them, been its most distinguished foes, the ablest and most admired Defenders of Truth? What then? the same stormy agitation of the air which tends sometimes to purify it from foulness and disease, destroys the noblest Works of Art, the finest exhibitions of Nature; makes dreadful havock in the world of waters; fatally injures Commerce, and lessens our wealth and property. As a Body, I will risque the affirmation, they have established and perpetuated the causes of that Infidelity, which sometimes, as Individuals, they have not unsuccessfully attacked. Nay more; they are themselves the objects of that Infidelity, and by no means Almighty God, or his Son Jesus Christ. They have been our Guides and Instructors by works of supererogation. In Christian Ethics they have required MORE than is necessary, more than Jesus Christ deemed necessary; to fall short then of *this more*, in the items of their Diary, is downrightly to become infidel. Hence their never-ceasing clamours against Infidelity (*alias*, the Church) while they are totally unconscious, at least silent, with regard to themselves; the Clerical BEAM and the Secular MOTE most conspicuously exemplified. With respect to their establishing the Canon of Scripture, against all sceptical opposition, they have singular merit; but the establishing the canon of Scripture, and doing honour to the purity and simplicity of the Doctrines contained in Scripture, are alas! two very distinct things. *These ought they to have done; and not to leave the other undone.*

There is something so intrinsically excellent in the Religion of Jesus, something so captivating, so generous, so liberal, so humane, so gentle, so tender, so pleasing, just as it is unaffectedly set down in the narrative of the four Evangelists, antecedent to all School glossaries, that men of genius and deep erudition could not but be instantaneously struck and affected by it, did they but bestow a hundredth part of the pains and trouble they voluntarily

voluntarily lavish upon subjects infinitely inferior. Geni-
 ules, generally speaking, have a system of nerves and
 perceptions, select, irritable and poignant, beyond the
 vulgar lot of humanity: the beautiful, amiable, and
 sublime of things, strike them by a medium of commu-
 nication, I had almost said, contact, an oscillatory
 quickness of sensation, unknown to less elevated minds,
 to spirits less congenial with Heaven. Those appearan-
 ces, those arrangements in Nature, which to the eye of
 common observation, pass unnoticed, as having apparent-
 ly little extraordinary in them, when they meet the
 glance of Genius, the erratic look of philosophic sensibili-
 ty, kindle that lamp of exquisite enjoyment, of sentiment-
 al complacency in the soul, which only the Creator, the
 Arranger himself, can kindle, and only Immortality
 can feed. Such a superior order of human Intelligencies,
 happily framed and happily conditioned, should seem
 chiefly meant to taste the beauties and delicacies of Re-
 velation, placed there by the same Supreme Creator,
 with a like unadorned and unaffected exterior. Consider-
 ing such men also in the aggregate, VIRTUE is their
 darling object, the goddess whom they adore: and what
 is Revelation but this same divine Personage descending
 from Heaven in her native celestial robes. The picture
 never could be mistaken, by the genuine Sons of Wisdom
 and Philosophy, were it not in some places vilely disfigu-
 red, and in others distastefully bedaubed. Immortality
 likewise is the avowed Idol of such choice Spirits; and is
 not *Immortality brought to light by the Gospel?* Undoubted-
 ly; unless when thrown into frigorific shades, into horrid
fresco, by our teachers of incomprehensibles, our Re-
 vrend Licentiates in Mystery.

The System of Nature around us, and the various
 phenomena and deductions arising hence, so far always as
 we enquire after them, how intelligible, congruous and
 beautiful! Our Creator by placing the emblem of himself,
 the sun, in the centre of his works, of which every one
 may make his own use and advantage, but no one mono-
 polize, would seem delighted, and if we may be allowed
 the expression, ambitious to be traced, disinvolved, and
 comprehended, through the whole mighty scene. Every
 step

step we take, in this glorious rotund of material wonders, is a lucific advance to farther knowledge; that is, an advance in approximation to himself. If we do not voluntarily shut ourselves up in a dungeon or a cave, we cannot but see the light, and, by the direction of that light, the most obvious traces of perfect wisdom and design, in the transcendant Maker. But in his Spiritual Creation, the Gospel of Christ, if we believe the Clergy, Almighty God hides himself in mystery, and lurks in *camera obscura*; either, as by their strange account it would appear, afraid or ashamed to be seen. Alas! they mistake the great Creator for themselves: *loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*. We must attend to our Blessed Lord himself in this matter, and not to *false Christs*, and *false Prophets*. In opposition to such he expressly declares. *It is given unto you* (his Disciples, and all true Christians) *to KNOW THE MYSTERIES of the Kingdom of Heaven; but unto them* (the Scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish doctors and boasters of Orthodoxy) *it is not given* *. Similar to this is his characteristic declaration of himself, *I am come a light into the world; that whosoever believeth in me, should not abide in darkness* †. They that can extract Mystery from all this, are greater adepts in the golden secret of Alchymy, than in the *more* than golden secret of—knowing themselves. He who is a mass of darkness to himself, beholds all things else in situations of darkness; as the eye in a jaundice conceives yellow to be the universal colour. Our Saviour even commands his Disciples (a command in force to the end of the world) *What I tell you in darkness* (alluding to his parables) *that speak ye in light; and what ye hear* (whispered) *in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-top* ‡.

It is no wonder, in the reversed state of the Gospel, its light turned into darkness, and its simplicity into parade, by self-interested hypocritical devotees; that men of deep penetration, extensive views, and generous principles, have everted their eye from it altogether, rather than submit to perpetual disgust and mortification. As they

* Matt. xiii. 11. † John xii. 46. ‡ Matt. x. 27.

they could make their advances to their Creator by the luminous and glittering paths of Science and Philosophy, they could not convince themselves it was either expedient, or eligible, to strike into bye-roads of dark obliquity, and intricate labyrinth. In one particular only they incur blame; by not studying the Scriptures, at least, with the same care they study Physics and Philosophy, instead of taking the word of a Churchman, in matters of the last importance and concern. We blame them indeed, but we should blame the Clergy infinitely more, who, instead of taking *the Pearl of great price* out of its casket of gold, the Scriptures, and presenting it to be surveyed and admired by all the world; have, on the contrary, envying it its situation there, stolen it thence, and clapt it in a snail's shell, or rather, thrust it under a bushel, lest any one should see it, and sell all he had, in order to purchase it?—They have so blackened and disfigured *the Bible*, that it is absolutely become a Satire on itself, a contradicter of its own declarations, and an impugner of its own validity. *The house divided against itself*. No wonder therefore that men, indued by God with mighty powers of reasoning, and masters of perspicuity, should have shut their eyes altogether upon a book so profoundly clouded, so artfully mysterious; enamoured of the Book of Nature and of Providence, which lies immediately open before all, fair, legible and illuminated; where the day-spring from on high daily visits us. That Book which can bear no degree of contrast with the Book of visible Creation, is not the Book of Life; but the Bible of the Clergy, which having no intrinsic merit or sanctions of its own, must be ratified and rendered sacred by Oaths and Subscriptions. The Christian's Bible is a Book of light and knowledge; no hidden treasure, but wafted on the apex of a sun-beam. Articles and Confessions are *candles hid under a bushel*; *talents folded up in a napkin*; a furtive treasure, hid in earthen vessels, in the miser's penurious box, which he can neither take the use of while he lives, nor take along with him when he dies. —Upon the whole of this subject, Infidelity and the Priesthood, if the latter cease not to lay violent hands on the Bible, converting it to her own secular use; *loving not the Lord Jesus Christ, but her own belly*; through
covetousness

covetousness making merchandize of souls; and teaching things she ought not, for filthy lucre's sake: Infidelity and the Priesthood, I say, will step down hand in hand to the latest posterity, rather indeed as friends than as foes, if they understand each other aright; but equally enemies to pure undefiled Christianity, to cultivated Religion, and self-denied holiness.

The Interests of the Established Clergy, and those of the Gospel, *as taught by the meek and lowly Jesus*, I would ever consider as separate and unconnected; inasmuch, as we are reduced to a state of inglorious bondage by the one, and received into perfect liberty, by the other. The Clergy, after having degraded the Scriptures to the wretched level of being the mere stepping-stones of their ambition, their passports into the Temple of Mammon, would willingly make mankind believe, when they are reprimanded for their misdeeds, by those that have spirit enough to acknowledge but ONE spiritual Master, that Christianity itself has been attacked, and the Protestant Cause endangered. What, because a frog in the puddle, a snail in its shell, has been trod upon, shall therefore the majestic lion, the thunder-maned courser, be considered in danger? They are indeed in danger of trampling *more* frogs, *more* snails under their feet; but what inhabitant of the forest can match the strength of the one, or the beauty of the other! Let the grasshopper chirp its discontent, and its peevishness, within its environs, the brake; but let grasshoppers alone be summoned to its chirpings, let grasshoppers alone throw away attention on the burden of its complaint.

The baptism of mystery, on the Doctrines of the Established Church, was a singular, and time has proved, a successful expedient, to procure them respect and veneration. The very sound, MYSTERY, keeps people at an awful distance from them. To have supposed them intelligible, would have been leaving them in an acknowledged state of shameful self-contradiction; but under their present title, they cannot possibly affront one another in this way. For what is a mystery? it is a thing to us not in being; now, a thing that *is not*, can in no wise

wise contradict or falsify itself. But what has Religion to do with mystery? less surely than with the Pope's big toe; upon *it* we have something to fix our devotion, we see it, we handle it, nay we may kiss it, if we have the gracious permission: but mystery is impalpable, invisible, inconceivable.

Religion is a thing reveal'd,
Mystery a somewhat deep conceal'd:
Religion then, while mortals see,
And hear, can never Mystery be.

If there is any Mystery in the whole circle of Christianity, it must be the Clergy themselves. We are told, indeed, of *the Mystery Babylon, the mystery of iniquity, which even now works*; but what affinity there is in and among these *three* Mysteries, I shall not at present dabble so profoundly in Mystery as to determine, Mystery in Scripture is full as often taken in a bad as a good sense; how then the word should be retained, with such pomp and emphasis of repetition, as peculiar and essential to Christianity, to me is a matter *infinitely mysterious*. For my part, I should most ardently wish, for the honour of the *Christian Laity* at least, that it were totally expunged, and COMMON SENSE put in the place of it: that exquisite and infallible Sense, to which our Saviour and his Apostles always appealed, and without which their Writings and Instructions never should have reached us in their present simplicity and purity. Common Sense is the common *inward* light of mankind, as the Sun is the *outward*; in the absence of the sun, who would think of calling us forth to examine the charming and beauteous landscape? not more preposterous, however, should this be, than to present intellectual objects to the mind, in the absence of *the light of the mind*.

—*Miserum est alienæ incumbere famæ.
Ne collapsa ruant subduclis tectâ columnis.*

Mystery is the very house built upon the sand, mentioned by our Saviour. *And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.*

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I am well aware that, by substituting Common Sense in the room of Mystery, many Doctrines of high renown, and obstinate veneration, should give way, like the baseless fabric of a vision. So much the better. This is the very happy and desirable end proposed. Unconnected with these, Mystery were a harmless innocent word, which we should freely bestow the Clergy, *nem. con.* to gingle in their Sermons and academic Orations, forming a peal of drowsy monotonies to the latest generation; like a string of bells round the foremost horse's neck, to direct all the rest, in a cavalcade of carriers. But Mystery, had it been quite innocent and inoffensive, never should have been adopted by the Clergy. It served to cover many of their horrid Doctrines from detection, and themselves from shame and disgrace. Their praying to Three Gods, and then to a Fourth compounded of these three, distinctly invoked by name, with a full rest of devotion to each prayer (an act of avowed Idolatry which Athanasius himself avoided) is a Mystery, and therefore must not be impugned: although St. PAUL expressly says, *There is none other God but one; for though there be that are called gods, gods many, and Lords many; yet to us there is but one God, the FATHER, of whom are all things* *. And our Saviour himself expostulates with the Jews, how unreasonable it was to alledge *he blasphemed by calling himself the Son of God* (he never assumed a higher title, which we also may assume) *when it was written in their law, I said, ye are Gods, to whom only the word of God came* †. The difference between, *ye are Gods*, and *I am the Son of God*, forms a very memorable contrast here, without which our Saviour's words have no meaning. How naturally the Church would wish to retain *the term*, Mystery, to throw a veil over her absurdities! Take it away, how shocking should be the naked delineations of her treple and quadruple DEITY ‡! *Habeat sibi et suis.*

It would extend the Writer's present plan too far, to enter into a more particular detail of her Doctrines,
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* 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6.

† John x. 34, 35, 36.

‡ See the Litany.

lurking under the opaque of Mystery, like Satan enveloped in the shadow of night. Barely to name a few of them, should seem a sufficient exposure of their *blackness of darkness*. Their goodly Doctrine of *Original Sin*, whereby God, the righteous and merciful Judge of all the Earth, *who willeth not that any should perish, but that all should be saved*, in order to preserve the honour and decorum of his Character, must first damn the whole human race, before he can be enabled to save a few individuals.—N. B. The compilers and espousers of this Doctrine, no doubt, thought and think themselves the very first personages of this *happy few*.—Their goodly Doctrine of *Sacrificial Satisfaction*, in the Person of Jesus Christ, or his *Imputed Righteousness*; whereby the Father of mankind, in order to BECOME placable, gave the most convincing and glorious proof possible to be conceived, of his being ALREADY placable. *God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life*. N. B. No doubt, the compilers and espousers of this Doctrine were, and are, and shall be, the blessed *Exempli Gratia's* of this Imputed All-sufficiency; in consequence of which, all Truth, Wisdom and Virtue below, become mere *caput mortuums*. The Writer scarcely dare produce here a memorable saying of our Lord's, lest, *like pearls thrown before swine*, the Clergy should turn about and rent Him. *A good man OUT OF THE GOOD TREASURES OF HIS HEART, bringeth forth good things: but an evil man out of the evil treasures of his heart bringeth forth evil things*. Had our Clergy conceived the sentiment, they should have expressed it thus. *A good man out of the all-sufficiency of Imputed Goodness, bringeth forth good things: but a bad man out of the Pandemonium of Imputed Guilt, bringeth forth evil things*.—Need I mention also their goodly Doctrine of *Predestination*; whereby Almighty God formally incapacitates himself from gratifying even the propensions of his own Nature, exercising his tender mercies, *which are over all his works*, by certain Decrees made long before the objects of those Decrees were in being; like the Laws of the Medes and Persians, irreversible, and like the Laws of Draco, written in blood? N. B. The compilers

pilars and espousers of this Doctrine were, are, and shall be, no doubt, the bosom darlings of these wonderful Decrees, the Elect—but *not gathered from the four winds*; that should be quite *too* extensive.

Need I mention also their goodly Doctrine, of *Works done before Grace*; whereby the vilest caitifs, the most profligate, abandoned characters, equally with the good, are pronounced fit to relish the pure, holy, and heavenly truths of the Gospel; its gentleness, modesty, meekness, and self-denial; notwithstanding Jesus Christ has told us the consequence of sowing *new cloth upon old garments, and putting new wine into old bottles*. Beside leaving behind him the admirable parable of *the Sower that went forth to sow. Some of the seed fell by the way-side, some on stony ground, and some among thorns; but none brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold, but that which fell into GOOD GROUND*. N. B. The compilers and espousers of this Doctrine were, and are, without a peradventure, in *this state of Grace*, and all the rest of mankind damned to the bottomless pit, with the Devil and his Angels.—In short, with respect to the foregoing notable Doctrines, and others equally as notable, branching out luxuriously from these, the Established Clergy have one never-failing reason or apology in their favour. Credo quia impossibile est.

Our Churchmen talk and vociferate about Infidelity: but who would not be an Infidel, rather than a swearer or a subscriber to the above abhorrent Doctrines? Had I room at present, I could paint them, without exaggerations, in such frightful and abominable colours, that even blushing clerical Ingenuity, should be obliged to own that they are fitter for the Creed of a devil, than a sincere, humble, modest, diffident Believer *in the meek and lowly Jesus*; who never spoke a word but what was plain and obvious, and what immediately tended to make men wiser and better; so far from giving occasion to such dark jargon, such entangled absurdity, and such mysterious contradiction. How excellent and sentimental is Infidelity, in comparison with what cannot be understood,
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or supposing it could, would be hideously shocking to our imaginations! Nay, how fair and generous is Infidelity. As she cannot form consistent notions of Jesus Christ, by the help of the Clergy, she does him no wrong; she would forget him: but our Teachers stun and stupify us with their fulsome regards for this truly divine Personage, at the same time that they dress out both him and his Religion in such colours as at once tend to deprive us of our eyes, and rob us of our hearts!

Nothing can be more applicable to our purpose here than a remark of Mr. Addison; who was always peculiarly happy and correct in his remarks. "An ignorant Devotee affronts the Divinity, more than an Atheist; for it is better to disbelieve a Deity, than to form any notions of him unworthy of the infinite perfections of his Nature." Whether our excellent moralist and critic had in his idea, at the time, the particular dogmas of School Divinity, I will not presume to say; but supposing he had, he could not have formed a juster sentiment in fewer words. All must be ignorant devotees, without exception, who affix their names, their assent and consent to Doctrines, which they can neither form any rational notion of, by the powers of their own mind, nor, by the vehicle of language, can explain or communicate to others: but to attribute these obscurities, these darkneses, these incognitos, to *the Father of lights, in whom is no darkness at all*, or to Jesus Christ, who came to be *the light of the world*, is an exploit of blind and infatuated Bigotry, scarce to be credited, did we not see it with the seeing of our eyes, and hear it with the hearing of our ears—Several of our polemical Doctors, indeed, have attempted to explain and reconcile these Doctrines to one another, and to common sense; but all their labours ended where they began, with the mortification to them of having exposed their unwortheiest passions, as well as their learned impotence †. The Doctors South, Wallis, Sherlock, Bennet, Waterland, &c. what did they do, the mighty champions of Orthodoxy

† In Letters on the Trinity, shortly to be published, this will be shewn at full length.

doxy and establishment? They excited the sanguine hopes of their respective friends, and raised the expectations of the world, to see—gladiators, by pairs, dealing about them with the spiritual sword; prize-fighters shaking the fist of controversy at each other, but none of them smiting to the ground; equally defenceless each, and yet (oh strange!) equally invulnerable. Their weapons just touched at the point, and no more: they emitted little sparks by collision; but this only shewed their hardness, not their temper. A whole nation, for half a century, went out to see—*reeds shaken by the wind*; a mountain brought to bed of its mouse, and a little mole peeping out of the hillock itself had made!

It is a subject truly effecting to an ingenuous mind, one well disposed to receive and to recommend the unaffected, amiable truths of the Gospel, to observe a set of Doctrines established, in a Reformed Protestant Church, which instead of leading to light, knowledge, peace, and harmony; plunge even their friends and abettors into eternal wrangling and disputation, and erect a barrier of doubts and difficulties in their way of conciliating adversaries; of making proselytes among those liberal independent spirits, who can never be brought tamely to shut the eye of ridicule and contempt on folly and inconsistency, however scholastically taught and sanctified. *Blessed are the peace-makers*, says our Saviour: surely then, *curled must be the peace-breakers*. The first, adds the same divine Person, *shall be called the Children of God*: What then shall the last be called? by the most righteous contra-sentence, *the Children of Belial*. Behold, says Jesus Christ to his Disciples, *I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves*. But our law-giving, excommunicating Clergy cannot possibly be His Disciples, for they are wolves in the midst of the flock.

It has frequently astonished me that, in moments of cool recollection, and happy retirement from ecclesiastical turmoils and altercations, Churchmen, of honest intentions and candid manners (for many such there are) have not been often struck with the obvious contrariety between the Hierarchy and the Scriptural Church of

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Christ; so effectually struck as at once to burst asunder those fastenings of communion, which connect them with *the one*, but alas! separate them from *the other*. It is so natural, so consentaneous to happy prepossession, till we become consummately acquainted with life and manners, to expect from the Ministers of Heaven, the flames of Immortality, *brought to light by the Gospel*, evidences of self-denial, instances of voluntary abstractions from the world, even amounting to magnanimity and the sublime; that we cannot avoid on some occasions, being thrown into temporary doubts, with regard to the intrinsic influence of Religion on the minds of men, the specific advantage of Revelation, above other Institutions, when we see it broken, dishonoured and abused, every day, by its professed Teachers.

This, no doubt, is one of the never-failing sources of Infidelity: and really Infidelity is not without her excuse, inasmuch as she is determined in her scepticism, not from consulting the Sacred Oracles themselves, but from her listening *only* to the licensed established mouths of these Oracles. The Bible has effectually removed the matter of astonishment just now hinted at. John xii. 42, 43. *Among the chief Rulers also many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not CONFESS Him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue: FOR THEY LOVED THE PRAISE OF MEN MORE THAN THE PRAISE OF GOD.* These few plain expressive words, the reflection of the Evangelist himself, fully account for that perfect security and invulnerableness of all Bodies ecclesiastically established; which nothing, in the whole wide circuit of probable conjecture, could otherwise account for. The cementing principle of all is, *Riches and Honours*; by which every part so attractively adheres to its fellow, acts and re-acts so powerfully, by indentation, that the permanency of the whole is no more to be wondered at, triumphing over a long succession of ages, than the firmness and durability of some old Gothic Edifice, whose stone and mortar, instead of loosening and crumbling away by the *edax rerum omnipotens*, Time, grows harder and more consolidated, year by year.—To *confess* Jesus Christ, in Scripture Language,

is to adopt his peculiar Doctrines and Manners, with that noble hardihood of spirit, equally unblushing and unyielding, which he himself at once exemplified and sanctified. His peculiar Doctrines are—not far-fetched, speculative opinions—but Moral Duties, personal domestic Virtues. Those splendid, glaring accomplishments, connected with government and empire, flashing with Attic lightning, and uttering forth the sonorous voice of thunder (which have also been *called* Virtues) he had nothing to do with, nor ever inculcated. His are meekness, humility, self-denial, forbearance, forgiveness, Moderation, Contentment; offices of charity, good-will, pity, mercy and benevolence. To *Confess Him therefore before men*, is, after his Precept and Example, to acquire and exercise those gentle and heavenly Graces.

It will immediately occur, however, even to the least observing, that to *Confess Him* honestly and uniformly in this manner, would throw Churchmen out of their proper centres in the Hierarchy; that is, would render them so dangerously accentric, respecting the System in which their orbits lie, that they must either, with the obliquity of comets, leave it altogether, or the system itself must unavoidably be damaged and fall to pieces. There is so continuous and lengthened a Chain of ambition, running through the several offices of the Church, instantly, and by contact, connected with this world; that no link can withdraw its stay from another, without the chain itself recoiling or breaking: but the improbability of this happening, is manifest, from comparing the actual centripetal forces of the links in the aggregate, with the centrifugal force of a link or two; the *whole* resisting derangement and dissolution; an inconceivable small part only tending thitherward.—We should think nothing of Clergymen, in the endless rotations and intercourses of life, the unavoidable revolutions of families, relationships, and property, being now and then necessarily plunged in the bustle and entanglements of secular affairs, which almost always fatally discompose our spirits, and throw a tarnish on our characters: but for such an arrangement to take place in the Church, such a systematic exhibitory routine of its Duties and Offices, as to infer THIS NECESSITY,

may to render it unavoidable, is surely such a decomposition of Christianity, so striking a counter-operation to the original Apostolic design of the Gospel, as must strongly impress us with the opinion, that JESUS CHRIST, independent of all human authority, in some blessed spot, among some happy little societies (perhaps altogether unremarked) has preserved, in spite of Establishments, his Kingdom and Religion. The Petition to Almighty God, in the Lord's Prayer, is, *lead us not into temptation*: the effect of every Establishment is actually to lead into and keep men in temptation: Beside, it was prophesied of *Jesus Christ*, and most eminently fulfilled by him; *my Servant shall not STRIVE nor CRY, neither shall any man HEAR HIS VOICE in the streets*. But the very constitution of the visible endowed Church is to *strive*, to *cry*, and *her voice to be heard in the streets*. Her ostentatious display of Rites and Ceremonies requires such a noisy and bustling spirit; her high worldly honours and appointments, all negatives of the true sacerdotal character: so that, what should have been considered by her as the motive and means of avoiding sin, has been by her unaccountably converted into the virtual necessity of sinning. Lastly, Jesus Christ peremptorily tells his Disciples, by the way of kindly preparing and forewarning them, that, *because they were not of the world, but he had chosen them out of the world; therefore the world should hate them, that in the world they should have tribulation; be persecuted, even as he was persecuted*: adding, *all these things will they do unto you, for MY NAME'S SAKE*; but be of good cheer, *I have overcome the world* †.

Now, instead of all these distinctive prophecies being applicable to our modern Established Clergy, and descriptive of their circumstances and characters, as his peculiar devoted servants; nothing can be more dissimilar and opposite. They are among the *primores gentium*, the *magnates populi*; instead of being *hated, persecuted and in tribulation*, commanding appropriated homage and precedence; *the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market places*: making

† See John, chap. xv. and xvi. *Passim*.

making broad their phylacteries; enlarging the borders of their garments, and affecting to be called of men, Rabbi! Rabbi! that is, learned doctors and graduated academics. Our Saviour pertinently adds, *all their works they do for to be SEEN of men*; subjoining this prohibition, universally and for ever binding; *but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not.*

Nothing can be a more exact and lively caricature of modern Church Establishments than the above. Nor can they with any justice allege in their behalf, that these remarkable passages ought to be considered as temporary and local in their application, as referring to the Disciples alone. Why were *they* to be hated and persecuted, as well as their blessed Lord and Master? Surely, for openly censuring and strenuously opposing the immoralities and wickedness of mankind; the corruptions of all orders and conditions of people; unseduced by temptation, and untterrified by menace; causes and reasons that should equally operate and influence at this day. Allowing the present age more polished, more accomplished, than that of the Apostles (which we readily allow) it is also more ingenious, subtle and exquisite in its vices and pleasures: so that, on the supposition of our Clergy performing the requisites of that duty prescribed and chalked out to them in the Gospel, with ardour and perseverance, they must be supposed in the same predicament, with regard to the world around them, that our Lord assured his Disciples they themselves should be in, after his departure from them, *bated and persecuted*. Our times, indeed, are too polished for the downright hatred and persecution of our Clergy; but doubtless, in consequence of a spirited and steady discharge of their pastoral office, their company should be less solicited, their conversation less relished; nay the one should be avoided, and the other nauseated by libertines and wicked men, (alas! too great a proportion of mankind) whereby the idea or reality of hatred and persecution might still truly be said to subsist, though somewhat altered or modified in terms and appearance, to preserve the perpetuity of our Saviour's prediction, as well as to demonstrate the peculiar nature of his Kingdom. But here lies the
extreme

extreme difficulty, the extreme delicacy. The Secular and Clerical interests so inosculate with one another; their views and prospects in life are so endlessly interwoven, that the weight of reproof and dignity of reprehension are totally lost in the Churchman's little petty concerns about himself, his awful timidity of offending a Patron, or his too heightened sensibility of favours conferred; which at once suppress his indignation at vice, and silence the voice of detestation at dignified profligacy of manners.

A Clergyman recumbent, in silent expectation, on the bosom of Providence; living in a state of voluntary sequestration from the splendors and gaities of life; deploring with philosophic tenderness its follies and enormities, but at the same discountenancing them with all becoming severity of example and rebuke; would be a phenomenon little less extraordinary, now near the close of the eighteenth Century, than a messenger or minister from the dead.—For men to adopt that mode of reasoning, that cast of sentiment, that series of convictions, by which their tenure and possession of palaces, princely revenues, chariots, liveries, sinecures, pluralities, should become precarious or indefensible; would be a degree of sublime virtue, exalted disinterestedness, however exemplified by our Lord and his Apostles, less to be expected alas, than most ardently to be wished! Give but a Churchman a propitiatory establishment in lands and pecuniary appointments, instantly will he strain every nerve, and put into strenuous exertion every power, not merely to consolidate his claims of possession, but point blank to insinuate, that to deprive him of those would injure, through his sides, the peace of Religion, and shake *ab imo* the venerable foundations of the Church; notwithstanding we are assured in Scripture, *that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her*.—But this assurance, it would seem, is not enough for our Dignitaries and Right Reverences. They would muster together, as the high allies and presidial friends of HEAVEN, the titles, honours, distinctions and preferments of this world; in compliance, no doubt, with their Lord's noted advice, whose advice, to be sure, they industriously follow on all occasions;

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occasions ; *make unto yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* This they must either have recourse to, as an apology in behalf of their state, grandeur and opulence ; or they must take their advantage of another Scripture-text, by flatteringly persuading themselves that, *burning and shining lights*, to command public admiration the more, ought to be set in silver and golden candlesticks : to make up, no doubt, for *his* hard and unworthy treatment, on whom our Saviour passed the above luminous elogium ; but *who was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins ; and did eat locusts and wild boney.* Which ever of these be the true apology, in favour of the Clergy, they have left an admiring world no room to doubt their uncommon ease and happiness of apprehending and expounding the Word of God. Their merit here seems as splendidly obvious as the excellence and sanctity of lawn-sleeves, rochets and mitres, to adorn and recommend Christianity.

That the honours and glories of this world, which, by certain romantic Christian Philosophers, have been considered, nay particularly dreaded, as the most formidable enemies of pure devotion and genuine piety ; should, on the contrary, by the surpassing ever-memorable management of our Bishops, be converted into their most confidential friends, is a circumstance, while it struggles and wrestles with our incredulity, without conquering it, like Jacob and the Angel of old ; ALMOST sufficient to persuade us that miracles were not confined to the Apostolic Age, but that they have descended (doubtless in hereditary succession, among the sons of Levi) through a series of generations, to the borders of the Nineteenth Century.—No wonder our divine Lord and Master so urgently excited men's attention to certain future Personages (our Lords the Bishops, our Dignitaries, and Church Governors) that were to appear and make so conspicuous a figure in the world ; *shewing great signs and wonders!* The humble Disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, raised from that obscure situation, and set down with kings and emperors ; presiding in the supreme Councils of nations ; beheld with the awful distance of princes and grandees ; consulted,

consulted, as Gods, in matters of ecclesiastical authority, as legislators in matters of Conscience; sweeping in the Convocational robes of Infallibility, and driving along in the crested curricles of ambition!—These are *signs and wonders* with a witness; fully to prove Jesus Christ no *false Prophet*; and sufficient, *if it were possible*, says the same blessed Paraclete, to—*cætera desunt*. I would not wish to throw a damp, a tarnish on the courtliness, the glory of the scene.—Yet, to our *men of God*, had it seemed good to have relinquished all this brilliant, this superb exterior, merely from the romantic pruriency of teaching and instructing mankind; and in consequence of this same sacerdotal accentricity, had they been, perhaps, unattended to, and despised; even at this low crisis of moral degradation, in this forlorn hope, they had not entirely lost their reward, while the following consolatory passage remained entire in their Bibles. *Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet: verily I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city.*

The Scottish Church comes in our way here to be particularly considered. She has long made the sameness of condition and authority, among her members, her matter of boast and triumph: but it is a boast without merit, and a triumph without victory. It is the insolent Pharisaical Egotist in demure Puritanical disguise. LORD, I THANK THEE THAT I AM NOT AS OTHER CHURCHES ARE. How applicable this beautiful passage of the Revelations to the Church of Scotland! how ought it to awaken her lethargic spirit, slumbering on the vain-glorious couch of affected purity and holiness! *I know thy works, and thy labours, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and that thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy FIRST LOVE. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place.* The Church of Scotland's *first Works* were
confessedly

confessedly to reinstate and preserve all her members in that Liberty *wherewith Christ had made them free*; removing all grievous yokes and oppressive burdens, to distinguish herself from the imposing tyrannical Hierarchies around her. But what was the amount of her labours and struggles to this purpose? She left her Members, as individuals, independent of each other, perfectly un subordinate and unresponsive; but moreover, positively requires the very same individuals, assembled together in Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, General Assemblies, refracted again into Committees and Sub-Committees, invested with singular discretionary powers; I say, she requires the same Individuals assembled together by an authority inferior, nay repugnant to that of Jesus Christ, to be absolutely subject and submissly accountable to each other.—The solecism, the contradiction here is glaring. Without the Courts of the Church, our Scottish Clergy are on a uniform footing of unsecularized brotherhood; every one a bishop, yet every one a curate *ex officio*; but within these Courts, they become one another's Masters in a series of ascending degrees, from the Presbytery-church-governor up to the General Assembly-church-governor; the last degree of which is altogether as mandatorial and supreme, with regard to spiritual matters of the highest importance and obligation, as the Pope at Rome, in the midst of his Cardinals. The Members of the Church, in the last degree examine, judge, decide, pronounce, enact, in the highest intonation of power, the highest style of Infallibility. If inferior Courts, or individual members, should at any time contest or dispute their authority, that is, should not immediately kneel down on the humble joint of adoration to kiss the Pope's toe, they are subject to judicial mulcts and penalties, to degradation, deprivation, excommunication: which last is neither more nor less, than formally delivering over her members to SATAN to be sifted and buffeted.

The Disciples, soliciting their Master for some speedy judgment on certain persons, *not following them*, were not indulged in their request, no not with one small spark of lightning to singe even the delinquents' clothes: nay,

may, instead of having others rebuked, they were severely rebuked themselves. *Ye know not what manner of spirits ye are of* : but the Scottish *establisbed Disciples* of our Lord, have not even the modest merit of petitioning Heaven, when they deem awful sentences necessary to be inflicted, that Heaven may be *alone* accountable to itself for the consequences. No ; they take the power and the instant execution of the judgment UPON THEMSELVES. If this is not, *sitting in the Temple of God, as God, and exalting themselves above every thing that is called God* ; I know not what is, even taking the egregious hierarchic-god at Rome into the account.—No subtilty, no ingenuity, can bring them off, without bringing off at the same time the Italian Pontifical, as well as the English Episcopal *LORDERS over the Heritage of God*.

Impious, as base, as impious, vain the toil,
Foul hands, the more they touch, the more they soil.

Our Saviour's commands are expressly against them. If his commands in general are unalterably binding, in this instance they cannot be dispensed with, without dishonouring and invalidating the whole. *Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them* : but it SHALL NOT be so among you ; but *whosoever will be CHIEF among you, let him be your SERVANT*. I know Presbyterian casuists contend, that this and other similar texts of Scripture have only a reference to exterior rank, the high dignities and appointments of the Church ; whereby one Clergyman becomes exalted above his fellow, and takes public precedence of him. This, however, is only spying a little mark of decay in the shell, while the kernel itself is half consumed with rottenness. The Anglican has deservedly the lead of the Scottish Establishment. Her exterior police uniformly corresponds with the interior ; that is, she is perfectly congruous with herself, and avoids the sinister charge of duplicity : whereas *the latter*, by an equivocal sort of self-denial, and hypocritical humility, acts grossly inconsistent with the avowed spirit of her Constitution ; and by her thread-bare pretensions to merit, attests and
stigmatizes

stigmatizes her total want of it ; her left-hand rises up in violence and mischief against her right. Beneath all her studied plainness of garb, her scanty revenues, simplicity of manners, and unassuming deportment : she is, in every material respect, as imperious, authoritative, overbearing, unrelenting and unforgiving, as her *transalpinean Sister*, however distinguished by brow so dignified and mien so majestic ; sweeping along in all the pomposity of cambric, velvet and silks.

Commend me to the Master, if I must have one, who approaches me with all the glittering ensigns of dominion ; the commanding splendor of authority ; to keep my pride in countenance, and gratify me with the idea of something better than myself. There is a principle of human nature that requires to be soothed by the fascination of appearance, and tickled with the lambent feather of self-complacency ; this principle, in the latitude of Scottish Church-government, is churlishly disregarded and neglected. There we have a set of men stepping forward to us as our superiors, in plain black dishabille, and quite Lyolian in the homeliness of their address : all the time they harangue us, as their language is that of mere men ; their figure and attendants rather below mediocrity ; but above all, as their appearance and mission are no where prophetically mentioned in the Word of God ; we naturally recoil, dubitate, and demur. Inspiration neither dwells in *their* words, nor stirs in *our* bosoms ; nor is even the nerve of novelty and ambition within us harmoniacally struck,—The result is evident : the spirited Christian Philosopher, if he is to have a viceroy over him, a sub-governor under Jesus Christ ; beyond all doubt he will bow to the surplice of a Dean, or the mitre of a Bishop ; who can entertain his *senses*, at least, within the silken pavillion of Attic ease and elegance ; and all the world knows, *in sensibus est sua cuique virtus*. Beside, he should have the superadded reward of an approving Conscience, in having fulfilled the precept of our Lord (so repeatedly introduced, as *happily* sympathetic with the *Visible Church*) by *making unto himself friends of the* MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

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The assumed right of the Scottish Church, in common with that of others, to call a man before her tribunal; to sit in judgment on his understanding; his words; his writings; is an assumption of the most daring and criminal nature: it is neither more nor less than anticipating the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; it is *opening the Book*, and adjudging to every individual his final doom. In other words, it is directly superceding the Last Judgment; superceding the divine appointment of Jesus Christ, as the Judge of quick and dead; and shutting the gates of a Glorious Immortality, so as no one can open; or opening them, so as no one can shut. The strongest and plainest prohibitions of Scripture stand opposed to this ecclesiastical enormity, this clerical outrage, that has for so many Centuries perpetuated the impiety and antichristianism of the Priesthood; as well as, let me add, the exquisite disgrace of the Laity, in meanly suffering it to subsist so long. Indeed were it otherwise, Jesus Christ had better have staid in Heaven, and not come to Earth, merely to deceive and torment us, with even less pretensions to a divine commission, than the Muffelman's Saviour. But this derangement of Christianity, this travesty, this misconception of the Deity, remains only the detestible hypothetic reverie of a Dæmon; to *amuse* his distracted imagination, in his Gehennic state of banishment from Paradise.

How perspicuously, how graciously does our blessed Lord and Master, ascertain and defend the common rights of our Species, the prerogative of every Individual. *Judge not, that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. Judge not according to the appearance; but judge righteous judgment.* That is, judge charitably, or not at all; for as we are positively forbid to judge from appearance, we have no remaining ground of judgment whatever. The prohibition is absolute and universal: so that the Church may as well formally and systematically break any other divine command, as this; may as well, in the persons of her members,

members, commit robbery, commit murder, commit adultery.

If the above clear and explicit laws required any inforcement or elucidation, our Saviour's beautiful and pointed parable of the TARES, would effectually inforce and elucidate it. The parable manifestly relates to his Church ; and would seem meant to condemn, as strongly as language can express it, all judicial acts, all authoritative decisions, of his ministers and servants to the end of the world. It must be so ; otherwise he is to be considered as having left the plan and administration of his glorious Gospel intentionally mutilated and unfinished ; in order to receive the stamp of perfection and beauty from those that should succeed him : so that, instead of *having done the work which his Father gave him to do*, he had, in this case, left it undone ; and so far from deserving to be glorified by and with his Father ; he merited rather to be sent back again to our world, to complete what he had suffered to remain, contrary to the will and instructions of his Father, uncompleted. But in lieu of this extraordinary misdeed, he has fully, in the Parable now mentioned, ascertained the peculiar nature of *his Kingdom* ; and manifested his purpose and intention, that all things of a spiritual nature, that is, all things whatsoever relating to himself, should be left to his sole arbitration at the last day. *The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field : but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. So the Servants of the household came, and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field ? from whence then hath it tares ? He said then, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, wilt thou that we go and gather them up ?* The request of these servants is in the true spirit of Establishments, at once representing their zeal, and their officiousness : but if Establishments have one nerve remaining susceptible of duty or affection to their FORSAKEN LORD ; let them awfully listen to the reply of the Master of the Household to these his super-serviceable tale-bearing Servants. *But He said, nay ; lest when ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them : let both grow together UNTIL*

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THE HARVEST, and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.

How the Members of the Church of Scotland can interpret the above Parable, with only the aid of common honesty and sense, and, at the same time, go on gathering what they take to be the tares among the wheat; I cannot in any other way reconcile to their duty or their Conscience, than by taking it for granted they suppose Jesus Christ will, at the Last Day, have too much business on his hands, and that they would fondly ease him of part of it in this world.—I know perfectly well they act under the sanction of Civil Authority, the umbrella of Acts of Parliament. What then? can human laws authorize or justify them in the open breach of divine laws? As well might the statute-book of the kingdom supercede and supply the place of the Bible, the Book of Inspiration. The laws of the State were not forced upon them; they were the consequence of humble petition and earnest request, an indulgent Parent putting a plum-cake into the mouth of his peevish, froward, restless child. And did they indeed, in their sober senses, solicit laws to enable them *in foro Conscientiæ*, to break the statutes and commandments of Heaven? Were they afraid that the very stones of the streets should cry out against them, for sinning with one consent against light and against knowledge, had they not got the authority of the State, to impose perpetual silence on these stones?—This affair is sovereignly ridiculous, black and horrid in every view of it: whether it be duly tried by the perceptive test of Ridicule, or examined by calm impartial Reason.—I have two Cases just now before me; no doubt among thousands that might be produced, that serve fully to prove the extreme length the Church of Scotland has pushed her usurped judicial Authority: usurped I will not hesitate to call it, however in alliance with the state; for the State cannot possibly create any new authority, in Christ's spiritual and invisible Kingdom: for, if it could, our Bibles, Christianity itself might be changed so often as a majority in the Houses of Parliament could be, by what-

ever

ever means, procured. In fact, the State pretends no such thing. She adopts herself only to present immediate exigencies, confined to herself and referable to herself; exigencies that might have taken place and required the same specific wise regulation, in the days of paganism, long antecedent to Christianity. How admirably informed, how exquisitely provident then Protestant Reformed Churchmen, in procuring that establishment from the Body Politic, which would have been equally valid, equally respectable, in Pagan times, and in behalf of a Pagan Religion!—The Cases alluded to are those of Mr. SIMSON, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, arraigned for Heresy about the year 1725, and the late Mr. FERGUSON; both men of unexceptionable characters and morals; whose only demerit was that of St. Paul, *confessing that after the way THEY called Heretic, so worshipped they the God of their Fathers; believing all things written in the Law and the Prophets.* We need not go to the INQUISITION at Rome, for all the malignity of a persecuting Spirit, low pitiful device, base inuendo, hypocritical subterfuge, illiterate harangue, quibbling distinctions and miserable chicane.—We shall find them (in full-length drapery) in the Prosecutions carried on against these truly Reverend Gentlemen. *Non ad reformationem Morum, sed ad confirmationem Fidei.*

From the premises it will, I think, evidently appear, how little the Church of Scotland gains by her futile ridiculous plea of constitutional Sodality; and that with all her conceited consequence in this matter, she is, through the progress of her several Courts, whether supreme or subordinate, only her own voluntary, systematic, but heavily-fettered SLAVE; summoned by Herself, and cringing to Herself: and surely self-slaves are over the most despicable and inglorious of all slaves. She sits herself importantly before her own tribunal; not that of private personal Judgment, for moral turpitude and misdemeanor, the only one in this world before which she should stand as a culprit; but a surreptitious illegal tribunal, totally condemned by *the Author of our Religion* and *the finisher of our Faith*, for delinquency *merely alledged*, and for defects *merely artificial*; on the account of which she

she is neither the better nor the worse, in the sight of Almighty God. She punctually pays, into her own receipt of custom, *the tithe of mint, anise and cummin*; but, *neglects the weightier matters of the Law, judgment and mercy*. Her chief disgrace, however, remains untold. In her supreme Court of judicature, in order to keep her within the assigned line of good manners, decency, and order, a Representative of Majesty always presides; who, whenever he thinks himself called upon by the urgency of the case, can *propria auctoritate* either dismiss the Assembly altogether, or order any member or members to sit down and be silent.—When our Saviour was solicited to decide a small matter of property between two competitors, what was his answer? *Man, who made me a judge, or a ruler over you?* He declined the office, as inconsistent with his Character, and contrary to the purport of his Commission; which was to keep the two Kingdoms, of this world and the next, altogether independent and distinct. But the Church, by throwing herself into a form unknown to Christ and his Apostles, has brought about a conjunction of these two kingdoms, by an unhappy and fatal necessity; though in themselves mutually repelling each other, like day and night; Christ and Belial; the God of this world and the God of the next.

This unnatural meretricious union must, assuredly, be dissolved before the second Coming of Jesus Christ; who will scarcely condescend to sit down on the same throne with the substitute of an earthly potentate, *who has all power in Heaven and on Earth given unto him*. This dissolution or disunion, in Scripture Language, is a Church's gaining her FIRST LOVE; so particularly noted in the Apocalypse; the negative of which is there variously characterized; *as the deeds of the Nicolaitans; the doctrine of the Nicolaitans; the blasphemy of the synagogue of Satan; the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balack to cast a stumbling-block before the Children of Israel; the seductions of that woman Jeshabel; the depths of Satan; being neither cold nor hot; being rich, increased with goods, and having need of nothing; yet at the same time, wretched and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked*.

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To all these, unrepented of, very awful threatenings are subjoined. *Repent or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth. But him that overcometh* (says Jesus Christ) *will I make a pillar in the Temple of MY GOD, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of MY GOD, and the name of the city of MY GOD.*—In short, the conjunction of Christ's Kingdom, with the kingdoms of this world, is, has been, and will always be, the source of every corruption, every defilement, every error, every heresy, that can happen to a Church; because her having thrown off, in this way, her invisible sentimental Allegiance to Jesus Christ, into whose hands the Father has committed the reins of intellectual Government, the communications, between her and the Spirit of God, are virtually cut off, her recumbence on Providence, and her affectionate honest confidence in the pure unadulterated Word of God; by which alone she can be effectually preserved from going astray, from dangerous lapse and pollution. *Where two or three are gathered together in MY NAME,* says our Lord, *there will I be in the midst of them:* but the benefits of this promise are forfeited, when a Church meets in the name of a MORTAL like ourselves, or in the name of her OWN ESTABLISHED FORMS.

I am well aware, she has thus brought herself to stand or fall with the State, under whose supremacy she is incorporated, and to which, by compact, she has transferred her allegiance, by enacting a set of special Doctrines, as tests and standards of Christianity, to be admitted and acknowledged by all her members. These Doctrines being wholly inconsistent with the spirit of Scripture, however *some* of them may be favoured by the DEAD LETTER, she could not possibly have subsisted a moment, had she consented to stand or fall by THE BIBLE. Her conduct therefore was perfectly uniform. In *these Doctrines* she committed a series of capital blunders, and rather than nobly relinquish those blunders (regain her *first love*) or more properly speaking, in order to sanctify and legitimate these blunders; she voluntarily committed another, the apex of the capital, by rejecting JESUS CHRIST as her Lord and Master, and chusing

ONE clothed, like herself, in the dust and rags of mortality : so that *the last state of this Church is worse than the first.* But *those mine Enemies that would not I should REIGN OVER THEM, bring hitber and slay them before me.* I say unto you, *the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.—Such solemn passages of Scripture should deeply affect all Churches, in a state of separation from Jesus Christ ; who have *forsaken the fountain of living water, and hewn out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

Such, doubtless, is the Church of Scotland, with all her plain, homely and unassuming exterior. She has set herself up as *an Idol in the Temple of God* ; and in the persons of her members, *falls down and worships herself* ; by enacting Doctrines of Faith, and Terms of Salvation, as if she were indeed supreme and infallible : whereby she teaches another Religion than Christ and his Apostles taught ; a misprision of duty thus strongly stigmatized in Scripture. *Every word of God is pure : add thou not therefore to his words, lest he rebuke thee, and thou be found a liar.* St. Paul also charges us, in his forcible manner, to disbelieve *even an Angel from Heaven*, should he preach up any other Religion. Our *Established Doctrines* have, undoubtedly, one degree of merit—they are unintelligible. I laboured many years to make something rational of them, with a strong educational bias in their favour ; but I have hitherto laboured in vain, like a man in an *Incubus*, struggling to no purpose in getting rid of the enormous weight that oppresses and smothers him. To me they never proved any thing clearly and certainly, but the non-inspiration of the Compilers ; who had taken uncommon pains, merely to render our eyes and ears useless. *Nos in sermone illorum, quem non intelligimus, surdi perfecti sumus.* Where they happen to be understood, they contain something so shocking to humanity ; so repugnant to our happy and intuitive ideas of God ; so inconsistent with what Jesus Christ, who was in the bosom of the Father, has discovered to us of him ; so inimical to our species at large ; so counter operative to intellectual

intellectual Free Agency, and so destructive of moral feeling and sentiment, that we must conclude them to be what they really are, Doctrines—not according to godliness, in St. Paul's sense; but *perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth: mere questions and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings and surmising.* Had our eloquent Apostle wrote, *ex post facto*, he could not in juster or apter terms have characterized many of the positions in the Westminster Confession.—When I consider its Composers absolutely settling the Terms of Salvation, and pronouncing who *shall* be admitted, and who *shall not* be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven; the astonishing contrast formed between them and our Lord Jesus Christ, while it ought to wound every ear, ought likewise to penetrate the ingenuous recess of every heart; every sincere and truly grateful heart, which the Saviour of mankind always wins while he touches! He himself disclaims the very thing our hardy, unblushing Divines did not tremble to take upon themselves. In his answer to the petition in behalf of the two sons of Zebedee, these are his words. *Ye know not what ye ask: to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given unto them for whom it is prepared of my Father.* Yet this same forsaken and insulted Personage has she thought fit to deify with supreme Divinity, in imitation of her *Episcopal Sister*; no doubt, to stop his mouth with the superlative generosity of the compliment, for daily slighting and trampling on his Authority. *This People draweth nigh unto me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. They call upon me Lord! Lord! but do not the things that I say. They prophesy in my name, and in my name do many wonderful works; but I shall profess to them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.*

It has often occurred to me as a singular, a preposterous circumstance, in the conduct of our Divines, when they found themselves in the spirit of forming Religions, other than that contained in the New Testament; that they did not conceive the necessity of guarding against SIN, rather than against Error; and resolve to judge of Orthodoxy by ACTIONS, rather than by words. For instance,

in their legislative capacity, when they compiled their Articles and Confessions; why did they not select and arrange a number of those Sins that most easily beset Humanity, to furnish out tests and caveats for those renowned Compositions; instead of speculative Dogmas and theoretical opinions? Did they despair of completing the Number XXXIX out of the *magnum totum* of human depravity, the flesh's whole catalogue of vices and enormities? or did they in their infallible capacity of determining right and wrong, deem it sufficient to secure men's dutiful attachment, by pronouncing their assent and consent to certain solemn canonical sounds, without sense; while they might range with Sultanic appetite through the elysiums of Pleasure; the labyrinthine recesses of stolen delight? sit embowered in the verdant arcades of luxurious banquet, or loll in exquisite dalliance on the Asiatic sofa? The alternative was truly generous and indulgent to—THEMSELVES. On this occasion, such passages as these of ONE Jesus, and ONE Paul of Tarsus. *Ye are my Disciples, if ye DO whatsoever I command you. If ye will enter into life, KEEP the commandments. They are not the HEARERS of the Law, but the DOERS of the Law, that are justified:* must be considered as the enthusiastic rant of persons aiming, unprofitably, to be *righteous over much*.—In this peculiar train of sentiment, the two following Portions of the Thirty-nine Articles and the Westminster Confession stand on inexpugnable ground; which I shall adduce and leave with the intelligent Reader, with a few short remarks, as instances of uncommon facility in overturning that old-fashioned, obsolete, moth-eaten System of Religion, called CHRISTIANITY; best suited to so romantic a HERMIT as JOHN, who could be contented with *camel's hair* for a covering; and for his food, *with locusts and wild boney*: or to that quite *sui-general* Being, altogether unfit for this world, who, *while even the foxes enjoyed their holes, and the birds of the air their nests, HAD NOT WHEREON TO LAY HIS HEAD.*

XIIIth Article of the Church of England—Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his spirit, are not pleasant to God; yea, we doubt not but

but they have the nature of Sin. XVIIIth Article—They also are to be had ACCURSED, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the Light of Nature. Westminster Confession, chap. x. sect. iv.—Men not ELECTED, although they may be called by the Ministry of the Word, and may have some COMMON operations of the Spirit; yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore CANNOT BE SAVED: much less can men, not professing the Christian Religion, be saved IN ANY OTHER WAY WHATSOEVER; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the Light of Nature and the Law of that Religion they do possess.

Why, in the name of Justice and Common Honesty, were our two national Churches ever considered but as ONE? One in that spirit of enormity which would DAMN the whole Gentile and Jewish world, in order to save a few pitiful Individuals in the Christian: in plain English, in order to save SUCH men as themselves, the Compilers of these Articles. It must be so; for would they positively and absolutely have damned their own SOULS? This would have been a blacker crime than the bloody perpetration of Suicide. The murder of the Body is an act of innocence in comparison with the murder of the Soul. According to these egregious DIVINES, Jesus Christ was the greatest foe, the greatest curse to mankind, that ever disfigured the annals of Time, or imprinted the Earth with defilement. Instead of SAVING the world, which he himself assures us was his Commission, he came to DESTROY the world, by a Commission signed and sealed in the Tartarian regions of malignity.—*Every one, that hath heard and learned of the Father, says Jesus Christ, cometh unto me.* How heard, how learned of the Father? Surely, from the expanded and legible Page of Creation; the Light of Nature; the Light of his own Mind: that very Light, on account of the imperfection of which, all mankind, trusting even to its best direction, according to our learned DIVINES, will be damned. It could not be from the discoveries the Father made of himself to the Jewish nation;

nation; for, in this case, the *whole body* of the Jews would have come to Jesus Christ, as *all* were partakers of these discoveries, or had thus *heard and learned of the Father*. But the knotty stubborn Fact is against this supposition. Nothing then remains but the Religion of Nature, cultivated and improved, by which men could have *heard and learned of the Father*. In truth, this is the affirmation of St. Paul. What a pity it is, his authority is not equal to that of our learned Doctors. Notwithstanding which, I hope to be excused for quoting his words. *The invisible things of God, from the Creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead*. Surely then, the knowledge of these, is the knowledge of God; and the knowledge of God, *that* which bringeth us unto Jesus Christ; and is, therefore, the groundwork of Revelation; according to his own precise words. *Every one, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me*. He places this important truth in a stronger light of illustration in another place. *If any doth the will of God, he shall know of his* (Jesus Christ's) *Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether he spake of himself*. Here is a degree of knowledge admitted, antecedent to the reception of Jesus Christ's Doctrine, that amounts to doing the will of God; and to which he appeals as a competent test of his Character and Mission, to distinguish him from an Impostor: so that the very Light or Religion of Nature, under whose tutorage the Church has pronounced us to be damned, Jesus Christ acknowledges as the evidence and basis of that Doctrine, or Dispensation, by which we are to be **SAVED**. *Quid sequar, aut quem?* Farther, we are told, *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*. So **LOVED** the world. How he could **LOVE** that world, which our **ENGLISH** and **SCOTTISH** Bibles assure us was only fit to be damned, those more than inspired Sons of Intuition must inform us.

But **THEY** are dead. They are *indeed*. Happy for us had *their works followed them*. They *rested from their labours*: but—*nil de mortuis nisi bonum*—they have imposed labours upon us, their survivors, never to cease on
this

this side the Saint's everlasting rest.—Peace to their Shades! that peace they neither *could* enjoy, nor *would* bestow, when upon Earth.—Blessed be that impassible gulph which separates them and us!—I would even abide by Moses and the Prophets, fully convinced of our divine Saviour's remark, that disbelieving them, *neither should we believe though one arose from the dead.*

It is not a little ludicrous, that Churches capable of espousing and retaining *such* wretched unmeaning Doctrines, not to call them downrightly wicked and impious, should yet look upon themselves as the hallowed reservoirs and channels of true Religion, of all divine Knowledge. It naturally brings to our recollection the infatuated spirit of the Jews, who, in their last stage of corruption and degeneracy, and only a few years before their total extermination, looked upon themselves as the alone favourites of Heaven; the anointed of the Lord; the keepers and treasurers of God's holy ordinances, statutes and covenants: a persuasion that even instigated them to the most lawless and abandoned of all outrages, the barbarous crucifixion of Jesus Christ; who during his whole abode and ministry among them, led a life of the most perfect inoffensiveness and innocence; nay, *went about continually doing good*; relieving and comforting the distressed, and healing all manner of diseases; beside, actually raising the dead before their eyes: insomuch that it was very pertinently asked by certain of themselves, who could not possibly resist the evidence before them—*When Christ comes, will he do greater things than these?*

A high degree of spiritual sufficiency, of arrogated consequence in a Church or Established Body, of one exterior profession; is a certain never-failing proof of great internal corruption, of rottenness at the core; the inward defect labouring to conceal itself by the outward appearance: nay more; this corruption, this rottenness, inseparable from all bodies artificially created and mechanically kept together, will assuredly, sooner or later, end in the extinction of life, and dissolution of parts.—Every thing of human, of mortal construction, held in union by the mere Powers of this world, as all established
Churches

Churches are, must fall to pieces in and from itself; but that Church whose only form subsists in the Mind, the Temple of God, can never possibly be subject to the labefactions of time, till the Divine Inhabitant, Almighty God himself, shall be involved in the general ruin.

History attests this in the strongest and most convincing manner. The FORM of Religion subsisted in, and was finally destroyed with the Jewish Hierarchy; but the SPIRIT remains and will eternally remain. The truth is, Christianity itself is no more than the *Spirit* of the Jewish Religion preserved and perpetuated to mankind; while the form was suffered to decay and fall in pieces. Our Saviour's words evince this beyond a doubt. *Think not I am come to destroy the Law and the Propbets: I am not come to destroy, but to FULFIL.* What was it then he came to destroy, for doubtless he destroyed *something*, once held inseparable from the Jewish Religion? The outward Establishment, the Ritual, ceremonial observatory FORM, which had come the length of overlaying and extinguishing the Spirit, had they not been disunited. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit. Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* The kernel was retained in high and sound preservation, while the husk or shell putrifying and consuming away, was thrown to the swine on the dunghill.—Can any thing then be a greater solecism in Theology, a greater proof of human fatuity and extravagance, than the avowed attempt and act to renew and preserve these external FORMS of Religion, which in their own nature are always in hostile opposition to its benign, serene, and blessed Spirit; and which our Saviour, previous to the Establishment of Christianity, radically and for ever abolished, in the instance of the Jewish Constitution? Can any thing evince a bolder, a more determined intention, to counteract the operations of the Holy Spirit; to remove that foundation on which Jesus Christ set Christianity, and to render all he did and suffered for mankind, wholly and effectually in vain?—It is creating an *imperium in imperio*, in the worst sense of the word. It is calling upon, and gorgeously arraying THE GOD OF THIS WORLD, to personate Jesus

Jesus Christ ; to deride his Miracles ; and to turn the tragic circumstances of his agony and death into farce and buffoonery ! for if he suffered and died, *only* to transplant the Jewish Hierarchy, so corrupted, fantastic and unprofitable, from Judea and Jerusalem ; to place it in the far distant insular latitudes of ENGLAND and SCOTLAND ; then did he die in vain ; falsify his own declarations, and betray that gracious trust and deposit placed by the Father in his hands ; then is our *faith in vain* ; then *has it happened unto us* (in the strong expression of St. Peter) *according to the Proverb ; the dog has turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*

The Apostle Peter, in his second Epistle, is directly writing on this subject ; of *false Prophets* and *false Teachers* ; bringing in damnable *Heresies*, and even denying the Lord that bought them. With what precision and truth may the Church's Articles and Confessions be called *Damnable Heresies*, that not only ascertain Damnation, but most liberally DISPENSE it ! And with what melancholy strictness and propriety may our Churches be said to have DENIED the Lord that bought them ; who have shook off his authority, his protection, his spirit, violated his express commands, and run systematically counter to his most positive Precepts ! In lieu of WHOM they have, with equal unfaithfulness and treason, acknowledged ANOTHER Head and Master ! In lieu of WHICH, they have brought into the Worship and Service of God, their own traditions, as arbitrary as they are uninspired ; and by all the sanctions and penalties of Civil and Sacerdotal Authority, have put them upon a line of credit, of belief and veneration, with the SCRIPTURES : viz. their Canons, Creeds, Articles and Confessions !—The application is so pertinent and obvious, that *he who runs may read* ; and *whoso readeth may understand*. The Apostle goes on to render the application still more circumstantial and observable. Methinks his prophetic glance was carried along the dark misty vale of time (like the sun, scattering every shadow in its progress) even to the EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.—And MANY shall follow *their pernicious ways* (of the false Prophets and false Teachers)

Teachers) *by reason of whom the way of Truth shall be evil spoken of.*

How many sceptics, infidels and libertines, speaking disrespectfully and undervaluingly of the divine Gospel of Christ, have been made by the mysterious, unintelligible and nonsensical Doctrines of Creeds and Confessions, it would be an affront to the reader's knowledge of the world, to mention. Learned, ingenious and excellent men, on account of the reveries and speculations of the Clergy, have taken a distaste to *the whole* of that Religion which THEY profess to teach: so that, in this respect, *the way of Truth has often been evil spoken of.* Yet I cannot but persuade myself that, with regard to many of these men, Almighty God will extend his gracious regards; who were, even with pains and industry, led astray by his *own pretended Servants*; who put together a set of Doctrines, as HIS, impossible to be swallowed, and then to illustrate and recommend them, fell out about them among themselves, in endless disputation and wrangling. Many of them, I take for granted, were incredulous, in reference to the Religion of Jesus, as represented by the Clergy, from the principle of preserving great and enobled sentiments of the Supreme Being; whom they beheld, through the medium of the Church, wading in mystery and embarrassed with his own Dispensations. Their recurring to the Religion of Nature, was as rationally consequential, as it should be for a *mere* Philosopher, when the pure simple evidence of the Gospel has been unaffectedly laid before him, to embrace Christianity. The Word of God and the ostensible Servants of God, the one a dead, the other living witnesses, affirm and propound contrary positions; how natural then should it seem, for even well-disposed acute men, to disbelieve both; both what is *called*, by Establishment, *the Word of God*; and what is *called*, by Establishment, *the Servants of God*. In this unfortunate state of unillumination from the Gospel, whatever virtuous sentiments those men conceived, whatever virtuous actions they performed, from choice and study, I have no doubt, were doubly meritorious.

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Had all the Heathen World been PLATO's, or SOCRATES's; I think it quite consonant to every just notion of God to suppose, that he never would have sent Jesus Christ, his own Son, to instruct that world! He says so himself, which is more to me than the quibbling and presumptuous assurances of ten-thousand times ten-thousand Churchmen. *I am not come to call the RIGHTEOUS, but sinners to repentance. They that are WHOLE need not the Physician, but they that are sick.* This is surely supposing there were Righteous men upon the Earth, previous to his coming, or else his words have no meaning or precision. Nay, had Human Nature been incapable, by the exercise and culture of those original powers with which the Creator invested it, of attaining to the knowledge and service of God; *that nature had been unworthy of Jesus Christ's participation; and the order of Beings within its precincts, unworthy too of his offered Salvation.*—Were the Religion of Jesus INDEED what the Clergy in their Creeds and Formulas have represented it to be; I should not waver a moment in my determination, but take my chance with SOCRATES and PLATO; and make this my constant and rapturous prayer to God: ANIMA MEA SIT CUM PHILOSOPHIS.

Socrates, accused by the Athenians of seducing and bewitching the youth of Athens by his Philosophy, makes this noble, generous and spirited defence for himself, More like an Apostle (says Archbishop Tillotson) than a Philosopher †.—“That he believed this province (of teaching) was committed to him by God; that he “was called by him to this employment, to endeavour to “reform the world; and therefore for him to forsake “his station for fear of death, or of any other temporal “evil, would be a most grievous sin. I am not afraid “to die (continues this divine man) but this I am afraid “of, to disobey the commands of my SUPERIOR, and “to desert the station he hath placed me in, and to give “over the work which he hath appointed me; and “therefore

† See the whole Passage, Tillot. Serm. vol. 13. pag. 71-2, small Lond. edition.

“ therefore (adds he) if you would dismiss me upon
 “ these conditions, that I should forbear to instruct the
 “ People, and if after this, I be found so doing, I should
 “ be put to death; if I might be released upon these
 “ terms I would not accept them: I should thank you for
 “ your good will, but this I must affirm to you, that I
 “ ought to obey God rather than you; and so long as I
 “ have breath, I will never give over exhorting and
 “ teaching the People and inculcating the precepts of
 “ Philosophy upon every one I meet with.” On this
 truly admirable (I had almost said, *Christian*) display of
 heroic steadiness and magnanimity, the excellent Tillot-
 son has the following just and poignant observation.—
 “ How does the spirit of this truly venerable man upbraid
 “ the cowardice of many Christians, who are so easily
 “ deterred from their duty, and are apt to quit their Re-
 “ ligion for fear of suffering †!”

I would ask from whence this wonderful man was taught
 to think with the noble hardihood, the conscious dignity
 of a PETER, or a PAUL? nay, in one place to speak
 their very words? Doubtless, *that wisdom which is from*
above, taught all the three; *that wisdom*, which can
 chuse its own vehicle, its own object, in every age, and
 in every nation; and was never refused, since the creation
 of the world to any that truly sought it, to cultivate, or
 communicate it to others. Show me, since the æra of
 our Saviour and his Apostles, a finer picture, than the
 above, of a great and good mind! The legends of our
 Saints and Martyrs are mere truckt-out conceits, mere
 sanctimonious trifling, in comparison. Had Socrates
 been co-temporary with our Saviour, and entered into
 conversation with him, we should have had two declara-
 tions instead of one to this effect. *Thou art not far from*
the Kingdom of Heaven.—What then is the use of our
 Bibles, when a Heathen Philosopher could exhibit such
 specimens of heaven-descended wisdom, without it? Great:
 it took many Centuries to produce a Socrates;
 but the Bible, if attended to, will make every man a So-
 crates at once; that is, *wise unto salvation*. But it is
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† Tillot. Serm. vol. 13. pag. 71-2, small Lond. edition.

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the Apostolical Bible alone that can effect this; not an Articular, or Confessional edition of it; licensed in the Hierarchies of ENGLAND or SCOTLAND, which, in Peter's pointed words, while they promise us LIBERTY, are themselves the SERVANTS of corruption*.

It will, no doubt, sound rudely harsh in the ear of a Right Reverend Prelate to be told, that we should have been, at this day, many luminous degrees advanced in the Christian zodiac, had that Church, of which he is a Governor, never been born of the State, never started into political existence. At the æra of its *new birth* (but not *that* hinted to Nicodemus) we were left in the state of a clock completely furnished with all its apparatus of movement; springs, wheels, indexes and weights, but without a pendulum TO GO; stuck up in silent state, in dumb raree-show; from a persuasion, I suppose, that we moved too fast before—towards Heaven. But it will still sound harsher in the same courtly ear of My Lord the Bishop, positively to declare, that there can be no advance in divine knowledge; no farther propagation of the Gospel of Christ; no more subjects added to his kingdom; no more rendered fit to meet him, at his Second Coming, *from the four winds of Heaven*; till his REVEREND Lordship's rochet and mitre are laid aside; as implements of *putting on the new man, the whole armour of God*, altogether unknown in Heaven: till he consent to be clothed with humility, instead of velvet and lawn; and become, instead of an inrobed Senator, believing in the ALLIANCE of Church and State; one of those LITTLE ONES that believe in Christ. A robe of Parliament is not the WEDDING GARMENT, mentioned by our Saviour; nor are the Episcopal Arms, and the BREAST-PLATE OF SALVATION, by any means synonymous.

To hear the Hierarchies in each side the TWEED speaking, as St. Peter expresses it, *great swelling words of vanity* †, and boasting of their being, *the very Ark of the Covenant, the Holy of Holies*; which to touch, we die; one might be apt to suppose (a Chinese Mandarin for instance)

* Pet. 2 Epist. chap. ii. vers. 19. † Ibid. chap. ii. vers. 13.

stance) that some bold and daring Robber (Satan *ex. gra.*) had, muffled up in *more* than human deception (a big word) stolen away the CHRISTIAN BIBLE; wrapt it in a Tartarian whirlwind; doubled the capes of Acheron; and lodged it in—the bottomless-pit. But *cui bono*? The Bible in the hands of OUR CLERGY, is HIS greatest friend. The Bible is a system of Humility; but they have made it a system of pride. The B. is a system of Love; but they have made one of hatred. The B. is a system of Charity and universal Good Will; but they have made it one of Bigotry and universal Ill Will. The B. is a system of police, *only* visible by virtuous and good actions; but they have made it a system of police, unmeaningly visible antecedent to virtuous and good actions. The B. is a system of inward sentiment and feeling, in which the HEART is alone concerned; but they have made it one of external parade and affectation, in which the EYE is alone concerned. The B. is a system of gentle calls and incitements, to retire from the world; but they have made it one of bustling lures and temptations to quit retirement, and plunge into the world. And lastly the B. is a system of promises and rewards, that only take place in future, and in Heaven; but they have made it a system of promises and rewards, that *ONLY* take place upon Earth, and for the present moment.—With the LATTER Bible, the Bible of THAT WOMAN JESEBEL, the Church's numerous train may consort and subsist together, mutually aiding and encouraging each other: but mark HER fate, *which calleth herself a Prophetess, to teach and seduce my Servants*, as pronounced by Jesus Christ himself; *the lion of the tribe of Judea; the root of David; the lamb as it had been slain; who was alone found worthy to come and take the Book out of the right hand of HIM that sat upon the throne. Behold I will cast her upon a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation; except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and ALL the Churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and heart: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works* †.—Nothing can

† Rev. chap. iii. vers. 22, 23.

can be more awful than these words, directly aimed at all false Prophets, false Teachers, and false Christs.

We are told, in our Bibles, *Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope* *. That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine; for reproof; for correction; for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished into all good works †. Here is a full declaration, an ample testimonial, of the obviousness and sufficiency of the Scriptures, for every purpose necessary to eternal Life. Our Saviour's injunction to the Jews comprehends all mankind. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.* The Bereans we find particularly commended for, *searching the Scriptures, to know whether these things were so.* And Paul compliments Timothy. *That from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures; which are able to make men wise unto salvation.* Notwithstanding, the same Apostle assures us. *That in the latter times some should depart from the Faith; giving heed to seducing spirits, and to Doctrines of Devils.* Doctrines of devils, Doctrines in alliance with Pride, Ambition and vain Glory; the special crimes by which Lucifer vacated his seat in Heaven; and the successful engines by which he advances and establishes his Kingdom upon Earth: hence they are, with great strictness of speech, termed *the Doctrines of Devils*. St. Paul elsewhere calls the Teachers of them, *Men of perverse minds; lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God; having the form (the pretension) of godliness; but denying the power thereof: ever learning; but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth: covetous, that is, idolatrous; and worshippers of their own belly.*

These monstrous excesses, these extravagances, in the latter times of Christianity—to what are they owing? to what madness? what infatuation? what witchcraft? To a plain matter of fact. *Our forsaking the Fountain of living*

* Rom. xv. 4.

† 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

living waters; and hewing out unto ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. That is, our neglecting, shamefully neglecting, day after day, and year after year, to obey our Saviour's command, *to Search the Scriptures*; which, of all the writings ever composed, can alone make us wise unto Salvation. *False Christs* and *false Prophets* never should have had any credit, any establishment in the world; teaching the doctrines of devils, tyranny, encroachment, oppression, uncharitableness, bigotry and persecution; which together form the very Creed of the Devil himself; had mankind read and studied the Scriptures for themselves, without, in any instance, trusting to a Priest or Churchman; who pretend to the exclusive right of teaching and expounding them: a pretension of pride and arrogant sufficiency, which set Antichrist on the throne of Rome; the undoubted parent of all other establishments around her, although of humbler mien, and more modest carriage. *Even now there are many Antichrists.*—Jesus Christ is a Priest, *after the order of Melchisedec*; that is, his Priesthood is untransferable and everlasting: the Aaronic Order is consequently extinct, which was derivative; which lived and was handed over by succession. All mankind, all the Christian Laity throughout the world, are *ipso facto* constituted Priests, under Jesus Christ, the GREAT HIGH PRIEST, in the Temple of God. *The Temple of God is holy; which Temple YE are*, says St. Paul, *i. e.* all mankind, without exception, that believe in the Son of God. The Levitical Succession subsisted, by the appointment of God, until Christ: it then ceased of course for ever. Jesus Christ, since the times of the Apostles, could not have a Successor or Representative lineally, because HE FINISHED THE WORK which his Father gave him to do, and then ascended into Heaven, to be glorified with his Father.

It is a perfect solecism in terms, to suppose that any but the Apostles could be his Successors in the Priesthood or Ministry; because he could not be represented by any but *EQUALS*; that is, Persons under the same influence of the HOLY SPIRIT: otherwise, the Priesthood should have descended in a line of endless declension and degeneracy, instead of being immutable and eternal, according

to the order of Melchisedec ; which was impossible. The Apostles indeed virtually and ministerially represented Him ; for it was absolutely necessary they should, being the only capital WITNESSES of their great Master's *life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension* ; without whose concurrent attestations of what they, over and over again, HEARD and SAW, Christianity, the most distinguished and precious Blessing ever, since the Creation of the world, vouchsafed to mankind, would have been overlaid in the birth, and alas ! irrecoverably lost : but his *Mission, Character and Miracles*, incontestibly established by their uniform living, and afterwards, *recorded* evidence ; all was done that could be done, or was really necessary to be done.

But how did the Apostles ministerially represent Jesus Christ? not surely as mere MEN. No ; but as divine Agents, Prophets or Confessors, under the immediate influence of ONE common spirit of Inspiration with their Lord. Otherwise indeed, it would truly have been *sewing new cloth on old garments* ; and *putting new wine into old bottles* ; the certain consequence of which any of the four Evangelists will inform the Reader. Our Saviour's words are express to this purpose. *And ye shall be brought before Governors and Kings for my sake : but take no thought how or what ye shall speak ; for it shall be GIVEN you in that same hour what ye shall speak ; for it is not YE that speak, but the Spirit of YOUR Father which speaketh in you †.* This Communication of the *Holy Ghost*, and the power of *working Miracles*, depending on it, ceased with the Apostles, as being no longer necessary. That illustrious super-eminent WORK, which the Father had given them to do, they executed, aided and guided by his holy Spirit, with all diligence and faithfulness : they witnessed it by their lives ; ratified it, many of them, by their deaths ; and left the completion and establishment of it upon everlasting record in their Writings. Consequently, the lineal ministerial Succession of Christ and his Apostles, ENDED with the era of Miracles and the visible communications of God's holy Spirit. To deny this, is to deny that Christ is a Priest for ever after the

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† Matt. x. 18, 19, 20.

order of Melchisedec, the Prince of peace ; and to assert, that the Aronic or Levitical Priesthood and Succession still subsist, notwithstanding the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; the once *only* appointed scene of their official observances: which is precisely the same thing as to deny, that *Christ is come in the flesh*; for if he be indeed come, then are all Priestly offices and duties positively ceated, never again to be resumed. St. Paul puts this matter beyond a doubt. *Verily there is a disannulling of the Commandment, which went before, for the unprofitableness thereof*: that is, the Levitical Priesthood, with which was inseparably connected the whole exhibitory rotations of the ritual, ceremonial Law. And for the very best reason, according to the same Apostle; **FOR THE LAW MADE NOTHING PERFECT.** Jesus Christ, therefore, adds he, *takes away the first, that he may establish the second.* That is, totally abolishes the Law of Ceremonies, that he may establish the Law of Virtue or Morality: or in other words, becomes HIMSELF our great High Priest; in place of that hereditary succession of Priests from Aaron and Levi.

Now, an ORDER he thought necessary to destroy, previous to his assumption of the Office himself; he surely never intended should be restored subsequent to himself; for this would be disproving and invalidating his OWN personal Investiture; and tacitly acknowledging he had unadvisedly and uselessly abolished the Aronic Priestly office; a procedure utterly subversive of the wisdom, the honour, the decorum, the dignity of his Character. The supposition indeed were altogether tantamount to that peculiar crime so strongly marked by St. John. *Many Deceivers are entered into the world, who CONFESS not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh: those are Deceivers and Antichrists.* Now to declare any order of Priesthood collateral or continuous with HIS, is the same thing precisely, as denying his Priesthood; denying it to be untransferable, unsuccessive, immutable; or, according to St. John, *not confessing he is come in the flesh*, which is the sin of Antichrist.

The Scriptures then, in the hands of the Laity, perfectly free from all enjoined Comments or Glossaries
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whatsoever, are, as I conceive it, the only perpetuation of the Christian Priesthood appointed by Heaven, or requisite in itself. With these pure and holy Oracles in our possession, we are in effect, so far as our Salvation is concerned, as happily circumstanced, as if Jesus Christ and his Apostles were just now on the Earth, and actually paying us a gracious visit; repeating over again, *viva voce*, their admirable lessons of wisdom and morality; and exhibiting to our astonished senses their perfect examples of amiable innocence, and godlike simplicity. *He being dead yet speaketh*, may, in a super-eminent sense, be applied to every one of them; speaking by written Inspiration to us, in the same way that the Holy Ghost spoke intuitively to them; by *silence and inward feeling*: inasmuch that their writings, so far as Salvation is interested, no more require human supplementary explication, now in the *eighteenth Century*, than their sayings, these very writings, orally communicated by the inspired writers themselves, required human supplementary explication. But what even established Doctor would not start back with spirit indignantly aggrieved, from the recorded rudeness and effrontery (supposing such a thing recorded) of that person who had stepped up, to a SAVIOUR, to a PETER, or to a PAUL, and insisted on arranging and explaining his *sentiments*, his *expressions* to the People; surmising, at the same time, that they particularly required it, lest the ignorant credulous multitude might otherwise be deceived or misled? Now, any ill usage, any gross familiarity offered to their Writings is the same thing, to all intents and purposes, as if it had been offered to their Persons. Alas! where shall we find room, time or patience, to enumerate the thousandth part of such freedoms, such indignities, by even their pretended Servants and Successors, offered to Jesus Christ, and every one of his inspired Apostles! The sentence, the words, though descending from Heaven on the lightning-wafture of Inspiration, rudely snatched from their blessed lips; and the hallucinations of doting theologians, the Pharisaical trumpery of graceless and officious zeal, ranted and thundered in our ears (rather stunned than instructed) in their stead!—If their language or reasoning require human assistance now; each certainly required it equally when

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they were the *living* instructors of mankind ; sojourned on our Earth, and conversed freely with all around them ; but if they met with no such indecent treatment, such preposterous familiarity, at *that time*, it is a scandal to the Professors of Christianity, but a more indelible magnitudinous scandal to its acknowledged Teachers, that they should meet even with the smallest degree of indecent treatment, of preposterous familiarity now.

It may be alledged, that from a variety of unavoidable causes ; ignorant, careless copiests ; interested, partial transcribers ; the flux and reflux of revolving generations, which, like the influent and reffluent tide, always throw up dirt and rubbish ; many inaccuracies, misarrangements, interpolations, have happened to the Text, which require to be rectified and adjusted. By whom ? Alas ! I am mortified and pained to say by whom !—By persons as likely to act ignorantly, carelessly, interestedly, and partially, as those were, by whose indiscretion such inaccuracies, misarrangements and interpolations are said to have happened. The glorious amount of all is, one blind man generously offering his hand to lead another blind man ; one beggar boasting his sufficiency to raise up another beggar from the dunghill.

Nothing but Inspiration can meliorate or improve Inspiration. The effect, the result of our Bibles, is not verbal criticism ; dead letter inanity ; but the influx of divine graces ; the unseen unaudible influence of Heaven ; a Principle within us, connected with our best feelings and affections, immediately blest and cherished by Almighty God.

The Bible, at this day, is, according to my idea, in the very state of perfection and perspicuity that the DIVINE SPIRIT intended it should be. What, was not the Omnipotent God equal to the protection and preservation of *his own Book* ; that Volume he himself dictated, notwithstanding the confusion of states, the concussion of nations ! What are these to him, more than the air, agitated by a butterfly's wing, is to the mountain-pine or forest-oak ? who permitted these confusions ? these concussions ?

cussions? who put a period to them, when they had done their work, as the ceasing of the storm smooths the expanded bosom of the deep? He who permits that storm to blow, that deep to be thrown into commotion; which are the same to him as the water-insect's little dimplings, the circles of a pebble casually falling in, should be to the over-hanging majestic rock.

The notion that our Bibles must be set to rights, is a notion consentaneous with that of the super-serviceable Philosopher, who should fall about finding out some happy method or expedient, to brush off the spots from the sun, in order to improve the brightness of his countenance. Yet, notwithstanding these spots, if they be real, how faithfully are the satellitary orbs around him supplied with light and with heat! how regularly, how beautifully, how usefully, do the Seasons revolve, and interchangeably relieve one another, under the various, but ever kindly approximations of his eye! While *those* continue to be supplied, and *these* as unintermittingly to revolve; we shall readily allow the elevation of the Astronomer's telescope to the sun's maculæ; although, perhaps, he may be all the while neglecting *the beam in his own eye*. Critical Divines, not Divine Critics, profoundly give us to know, there are many corruptions and blemishes in the sacred Text; many sentences perplexed; many passages mutilated; many readings erroneous; and many punctuations misplaced. I doubt it not; nay, I firmly believe it. What then? in the name of all wisdom, goodness and excellence, what then? Is our Salvation rendered hereby precarious or problematical? are the great Principles of our Nature shaken on their basis, or obscured in their glory? Is God, on these accounts, less eternal? less self-existent? less supreme? less omnipotent? less omniscient? less ubiquitous? Is Jesus Christ, the beloved and only-begotten Son, in his mission, character, legislative capacity, everlasting Priesthood, and judicial pre-eminence over all mankind; less the distinguished Object of our admiration, esteem, love, duty, gratitude, and thanksgiving? If THESE be no less certain, than that we ourselves exist, the living monuments and memorials of the above transcendent adorable Beings, and of those perfections

fections just now thrown into outlines ; even in their *present condition* should we hug our Bibles to our bosoms, as the divine deposit of our Creator, our Father, our Friend, our Saviour ; as the blessed medium of communication between Heaven and Earth ; between the sons and daughters of men, and the Father of our Spirits !—Yet would we interrupt not the task of the Philologer, the Grammarian, or the Critic, changing vowels for consonants ; or comas for colons ; although, perhaps, all the while totally forgetful that, as a Christian, he pawned his honour, his integrity, to a base-born CREED ; and sacrificed his Reason and his Understanding at the ignominious altar of a CONFESSION.

Preposterous and ridiculous is our conduct ! to the last degree puerile and womanish ! *We strain at gnats, and we swallow camels. We clean the outside of the cup and platter ; but we leave the inside, full of extortion and all manner of excess ! we see motes thickly scattered in our neighbour's eye ;* because our own has the disease of a beam laid across its axis of vision ! Before we have bound *the strong man, we go in to spoil his goods !* We would put wine of the richest vintage into bottles that are only able to retain—when they are empty ! Would sew cloth of gold on the mendicant's blanket ! wrap ourselves round in the glorying idea of our being RICH, *increased in goods, and in need of nothing, nor know that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked !*

I would not be thought to ridicule, in general, the labours of learned men, in collating and comparing the various readings of the Sacred Text ; to find out, if possible, the true ; but only when comparing their pains and diligence *here*, with their pains and diligence in matters indisputably of higher concern, in the latter case they fall observably far short of the former. When this misnomer of time and industry cannot be denied, I would value their criticisms, on the Bible, however ingenious, in no higher a style, than the classical criticisms of other men on prophane Authors ; a Livy, a Horace, or a Tacitus. The Providence of God is surely no more concerned, to preserve the coherences of language, or accura-

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ries of diction, respecting the minutiae of Biblical transactions; than it is to preserve the lucid face of heaven, the fulgid countenance of the sun, from being intercepted by mists, or overspread by temporary clouds: *those* being not less unavoidable in the world of morals and letters, than *these* in the natural world. How is the sun affected by them? not at all materially. A breeze forthwith springs up, ventilates the bosom of the air; and all again is golden light and cloudless azure. How is Revelation affected by verbal disagreements? not at all materially. The glorious and sublime Work, carried on by Revelation, breaks refulgently through all these little darkneses, and derives even energy and value from them, by proving its total perfect independence of all obstructions *these* would throw in its way.—To have preserved the Bible, according to the minute exactness of our dictionaries and nomenclatures, free from critical reprehension; through a series of tumultuous, convulsed, ignorant, superstitious, hostile generations; dashing and breaking against each other, like the tides and billows of a tempestuous ocean; would have required a succession of mighty miracles, absolutely thrown away; no less than if, instead of saving Peter attempting to walk on the sea, Jesus Christ had stretched forth his hand, to preserve an insect from drowning. ONE illustrious, one stupendous Miracle was all along performed, to supercede the necessity of ten thousand; the SPIRIT was preserved, clothed in immortal light, and immortal duration; while, in many places, the *dead letter* was suffered to undergo those changes and variations to which all *material* things are subject, to keep free from the odium and fatality of idleness, or having nothing to do, our very learned Theological critics, collators and commentators.

We think no more of interesting the supernatural interposition of the Supreme Being, in behalf of scholastic historical trifling, than we do of ADDING, to the one Supreme God, two others of alphabetical manufacture, and hieroglyphical drapery! We have brought God down so entirely to our own level, our own Lillyputian standards; that we think no more of having his miraculous Power interposed in favour of our conceits and varieties;

veries, than if they were the common protecting fastnesses of an hedge or an arbour, to save a flight of midges, or a swarm of gnats.—REVELATION stands on the broad bottom of the Prophets and Evangelists; if their Evidence be clear, uniform, consistent, irrefragable; then is Revelation clothed immaculately in the mantle of light; knocking, in the native habiliment of an Angel, at our doors; but alas! too often treated like mendicant strangers at our doors—denied entrance! We cannot possibly mistake her, notwithstanding she may want some of those fashionable furbelows of rayment; some of those spruce trim decorations; those enlarged borders, and broad phylacteries, to which our eyes have been accustomed. Had Revelation indeed approached us in these, she had discredited her celestial parentage, her divine original; she had surprized and dazzled our senses perhaps, that are surprized and dazzled with sights and raree-shows at any time; but when the entertainment of the moment was over, and our wits restored to plain and obvious discernment; we might, not improbably, be mortified with the reflection, that Punchenello all the while, drest out in tinsel life, and wooden existence, had been cutting his wire-spring capers, and throwing his lips into inarticulating movement, only to deceive us, and to prove with what humiliating facility, we oftentimes are, and may be deceived.

To draw more importantly to our proposed point. Under the patronage of kings, princes and nobles; and animated by their splendid subscriptions; we set out to make the tour of nations. Monarchs open their palaces at our approach. Ministers of State are ambitious to show us respect and civility. We have tickets of admission, wherever we go, into Universities, Academies, Libraries, Museums, Monasteries; and, in short, into every literary Repository, where Truth—or Fiction may have lain concealed. Even the private apartments of moths and spiders, escape not our inquisitorial search-warrant: we disturb their quiet of fifty or an hundred years, in order to—disturb our own. At length, we return home, the long look of every eye, the unaccountable idols of national expectation; loaded with manuscriptural

tural treasures, the mouldy records of forgotten ages. We open our budget, and out comes the emendation of the Text—one verse divided into two, or two verses consolidated into one: the Critico-theological Mountain obfetrically delivered of a—CONJECTURE.—During this learned farce of textual variorums, to what may we be compared? To husbandmen picking little finger-stones off our farms, in order to render them fruitful, or spiders' webs off our apple trees, to improve the flavour of the fruit, while the sterile useless clay, the cold impenetrable till, the canker and the cut-worm, are left unminded below. We would alter a parenthesis or a comma; fill up an ellipsis, or dele a redundant word; to confirm or elucidate the sense of a passage, which no more concerns the great Body of Christians, the intrinsickness of our belief in Jesus, or our duty to God; than an enquiry into the *colour* of our Saviour's hair, or *what sort of manufacture* composed his seamless garment, concern either the one or the other.—Yet we sit contented all the while under the cutting approbrium, of having introduced not only *the Jewish ceremonial worship*, but *Popish Idolatry* into our Churches; of falsifying the Terms of Salvation; of circulating Doctrines in the world, as of divine Inspiration, which are only the monstrous conceptions of our own dark minds; of defiling the living Temple of the living God, erected in every man's bosom; in order to monopolize divine worship within the dead walls of a PARTICULAR Church! of investing MORTALITY, either in the persons of kings or our own wretched persons, composing gregariously a Convocation, or General Assembly, with that spiritual Sovereignty, only claimable, or possible to be executed but by JESUS CHRIST Himself!

These things it will be found *are so*, upon honestly and fairly searching the Scriptures. Many men of excellent learning, and pure morals, have proved them *so*. The writer of the foregoing sheets has, he humbly thinks, proved them *so* †. Nay, their very best friends have unanswerably proved them *so*, by their always coming forth from *their* hands perfectly disagreeing and inconsistent

† See also *passim*, Confid. on Relig. Liberty. Part 2d.

sistent with each other :—yet are we, *like unto children sitting in the market, and calling unto our fellows, and saying ; we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced ; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*—Where then is the wisdom, the propriety of our conduct ?—fettered down to the expletive merit of verbal criticism ; the legitimacy of a diphthong, the inspiration of a punctum ! Dr. Tucker may find out a great and important difficulty in St. Paul's phrase, *baptism for the dead*. There may be a difficulty in it, but I doubt much its importance : and were the Clergy no farther necessary than to clear up *such difficulties* ; I should think myself fully authorized to pronounce them, not necessary at all. St. Peter found *some* things in Paul's Epistles HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD ; and perhaps the above phrase was one of them ; but St. Peter did not think himself in duty called upon to disinvolve or explain them : and shall Dr. Tucker, seventeen hundred years after Inspiration has ceased, attempt to do it ? He may indeed do it, as the Schoolmen of *his* Church have explained the Athanasian Creed, Original Sin, Predestination, Imputed Righteousness, &c. &c. render the difficulty quadruple ; the explanation unexplainable : render darkness more dark, and deepness more profound.

Our Clergy are, I must say it, too fond of cutting out work for themselves. But what sort of work is it ? Why, it is a modern chissel giving touches of restoration to an Egyptian statue of Porphyre, or Corinthian column dug from antient Grecian ruins. They would mend our Bibles, as they should mend the binding of a Prayer-Book, or the gilding of a Communion-Table ; by adding new, and taking away from the old. They have done more infinite damage, in this way to Revelation, than ever they shall be able to do it good, by whole Centuries of collating and comparing different Versions and Transcriptions of the Bible. Dr. Kennicott tells us there are some thousand variations in the Reading of the Old Testament. What then, supposing as many thousands more of the same kind ? The Old Testament, as it stands just now in our common Versions, proves to a demonstration the only thing handed down to us it was meant to prove ; the necessity

cessity and reality of the MESSIAH's appearance, as a Teacher from God, the perpetual Abolisher of the Old Religion, the religion of Rites and Ceremonies, and the Introducer of a New, the Religion of the Heart and the Affections; according to his own words, *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* That is, unless your Religion be transferred from external Form, to internal Feeling; from Jewish ceremonial observances, to private moral duties; *ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* But while as a dutiful member of the Church, the Doctor means to assimilate and uniformize those varieties of reading in the Hebrew Text; he forgets, both with respect to himself, and the Hierarchy he belongs to, that there is an error, an outrage, unadjusted, unredressed, in modern Establishments of Christianity, more than sufficient to render all others—mere fanciful spots on the sun's disk; mere local Poetic deviations from the rectitude of the NEEDLE. That is, THEIR ENTERING THE TEMPLE OF GOD, DISPOSSESSING HIM OF IT, AND SEATING THEMSELVES IN HIS PLACE. *YE are the temple of God* (all Christians whatsoever) *whoever defiles THIS temple* (enters it intrusively or in right of possession) *HIM will God destroy.*—In vain will the Church, with this deep mark of turpitude on her forehead, set about, with clean washed hands, to add typographical neatness or elucidation to the Canon of Scripture. She may, as a tub thrown out to the whale, throw such magnified discoveries in sacred literature before the eyes of Christians, to mock by diverting their attention; but sensible penetrating men, whose independence is their Bibles, and whose Bibles are the touch-stones of all pretence and artifice; will regard them in no other light than as certain corporation practitioners, who in order to CURE us of a cancer, fixing its fangs of induration in our breast, would dry up a pimple in our face: in order to remove the *tabes purulenta* from our lungs, would take our fee, and prescribe for us—sugar-candy.—Nor shall I hesitate a moment to say, when all these marvellous emendations have taken effect, and INSPIRATION has been made as perfect as—mortal hands can make it; that we shall be as far distant from
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the generous and noble spirit of Reformation, such a Reformation as will bring us back to our FIRST LOVE, as we are at this brow-fallen, lukewarm, mercenary, ignominious, voluptuous, effeminate Epoch.

As the intelligent, sentimental, independent Disciples of Jesus Christ, our once crucified but now exalted Lord, the Clergy neither touch our hearts, nor rouse the ardour of Immortality within us; but as hypercritical harmonists, and Commentators, mere namby pamby profers of see-saw devotion, mere grammarians, lexicographers; they would tickle our ears, and impose on our understandings. Established Churchmen, instead of doing offices of kindness to Christianity, brightening up its benign countenance and recommending its amiable duties; have done it almost irreparable and inexpressible injury. By giving it a glaring, ostentatious OUTSIDE, (in assisting to keep up which, many people repose, perfectly contented, on the sofa of duty performed) and at the same time, by discovering daily how little influence its divine spirit, its moral precepts, have upon themselves; they have, in effect, almost universally, withdrawn from it the respect and veneration of mankind.

The deduction is by no means unnatural.—*By their fruits ye shall know them*, says a very high Authority. If then the value of Christianity is to be taken from its effects only; and these effects being not more conspicuous in the Clergy, than in other orders of the People; how are the Laity authorised to consider the Christian Religion in any just, serious, or amiable light? nay, are they not hereby tacitly encouraged to look upon the necessity of repentance in a very *qualified* light? rather as a discretionary act of outward decency, some time or other to be performed, than as the source of unspeakable inward satisfaction, or the expressly enjoined means of pleasing Almighty God? The consequence of this will always be, a relaxed guard over our actions; a less intimidated indulgence of pleasure, and a freer gratification of our sensual appetites.

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There has been less virtue undoubtedly, less innocence, less faithfulness, less truth, less honesty, less contentment, less concord among ourselves, and less disinterested love for one another, since Christianity has been the Established Religion of nations, than there was in the rudest times of Paganism. Either Christianity is now running in a wrong channel, or Christianity is unworthy of our attention, from its own want of real excellence: else, why should it have slumbered so many tedious disgraceful Centuries, without making us better than it found us? Either the Clergy must be the delinquents, in this truly melancholy case, or Almighty God himself: either they have secularized their characters and deserted their stations, or Jesus Christ has forgot *his* character and deserted *his* Religion. The enormities of vice, the corruptions of living, and the profligacy of manners, even without any *Brownonian* exaggeration, into which all ranks and professions of people have fallen; bring us to the distressing dilemma of either arraigning our Maker, or our Teachers. —But the matter will not bear the ambiguity of a dispute. To fluctuate in our judgment a moment, would be a crime. Ezekiel the Prophet shall at once fix the stigma where it ought. *Wo be to the Shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves. Ye eat the fat and ye clothe ye with the wool, but ye do not feed the flock: but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. Therefore I will save my Flock, says the Lord, and they shall no more be a prey.*—How was this Salvation exemplified, how literally was the prophesy fulfilled, in the person of Jesus Christ; the good Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep; styled by Ezekiel THE PLANT OF RENOWN, to be raised up for the flock! But even this salvation of the Flock (which consisted, after the destruction of *the Shepherds of Israel*, in their unconstrained freedom of pasturage) how has it been counteracted, how alas! pitifully reduced, by the confederating *Shepherds of OUR Israel!* who still delight, like those of old, like robbers (in our Saviour's words) *that come not in by the door of the fold, but climb up some other way, to feed on the fat, and clothe themselves in the wool of the Flock, and to rule them with force and with cruelty!*

cruelty!—This is the capital, I had almost said the *only* source of modern degeneracy. Our proof is at hand.

Religion now-a-days, in all Established Forms, can never promote Virtue or moral rectitude; because to be virtuous or moral, must be the result of our own personal knowledge and convictions: now, this knowledge, these convictions, Establishments transfer from Individuals to themselves; consequently, we have no more property, no more sentimental interest in them, than we have in those of a musselman believing in Mahomet. We can no more grow virtuous or pious, by another's set of ideas, or feelings, than we can shorten or lengthen our bodies, to become exactly of his height. There is a growth, a progressive unfolding of our minds, as well as of our bodies: to stop the first, is no less impossible than to stop the last. Hence, we languish in our piety to God, on which moral virtue depends. We left it behind us at Church; we never bring it home with us, nor ever think of it till the toll of the next Sunday's bell forces it upon our recollection. To bring Piety home with us, we should bring the Clergy always home with us, for the Clergy are our Gods; that is, the judges and legislators of our Consciences. But then only one Family in a Parish could have the Ark of God, the Clergyman with it, at once: what then should become of all the rest? Why, just be in the condition we really find them; as void of piety as their Creeds, Articles and Confessions are of Inspiration. Instead of domestic, sentimental Piety, a mechanical routine of service takes place; a sort of reciprocal compact between the Clergy and Laity: both infatuated, and both imposed upon. Church Service is performed; her Articles and Confessions have been subscribed: the duty of doing these is the grand ultimatum. Would you have the Clergy risk their Establishments, their honours, revenues and appointments, by *honestly* declaiming against the vices, or inculcating the pure, humble, self-denied Virtues of *Private Life*? Would you have the Clergy preach weekly Satires on themselves? This mischance of duty you may require of them; but this mischance of duty they are too wise not to decline. Beside the Laity are the protectors and the treasurers of

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the Clergy's wealth ; would you have the latter fly broad in the face of their Benefactors, by calling them (what they would wish themselves not to be CALLED) by the odious and quite unfashionable name of SINNERS. *Being filled with all unrighteousness, deceit, malignity ; proud, boasters, inventors of evil things ; without understanding, implacable, unmerciful, whisperers, busy bodies, covetous, which is idolatry ; lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; adulterers, fornicators, lascivious, unclean, railers, drunkards, extortioners ; whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame.*

It must be confessed this is a grievous catalogue, which serve strongly to mark the times of the Apostle ; but whether any of them or all of them are applicable to the British Islands, in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, I will not altogether take upon me to determine. All the world knows Paul was less of a Gentleman, than a Christian Minister of the old bold primitive stamp ; therefore, if our Clergy, who are ALL professed Gentlemen, and to be sure, keep the very BEST company, are totally silent as to these particulars, and certain others peculiar to our age and climate (I mean out of the pulpit, for no doubt on the cushion, *en passant*, they must pass thro' the silken and downy medium of utterance) we ought in charity, *which thinketh no evil*, and from downright respect to our Teachers, to suppose that no such sins and vices reign among us. Happy, thrice happy Nation ! where thy *Watchmen*, thy *Shepherds*, thy *Men of God*, have nothing to do, but loll in their coaches ; sit on their bench as senatorial mutes ; impress with saturated ease and Halcyon recumbence, the fatten softness of their settees and elbow-chairs !—Paul's summing up of the above *obsolete* proofs of human depravity, must pass for nought. What a pity it should have reached our day, to lessen our noble, manly conceptions of Human Nature, now in so glorious and reformed a state. *Who knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things, are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have PLEASURE in them that do them.*—*I procul hinc, nec sacros pollue fontes.*—But to return from this complimentary digression.

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A man must have a proprietary right in his Religion, before it can become operative on his affections or actions; before he can make its peculiar incentives and comforts *his own*. If he has not, he can have no enjoyment or satisfaction in its precepts and blessings, other than in the exhibition of life and manners, virtues and heroism, on the Stage; the effect of which, even darted from the eye, or living on the lips of a GARRICK himself, lasts but for the moment. We are astonished at the Actor; nay, along every nerve of sensation we feel his powers; yet we return to the world, quite unelevated in idea; stoop to all the littlenesses of Prejudice; all the meannesses of vicious pleasure, and fashionable folly.—The farce, let me call it, the tragical farce of this momentary celsitude of mind, but alas! permanent habitual degradation of ourselves, is repeated, as often as we have ambition to hear and see our darling Player, the British Roscius.

A parallel remains to be drawn, which does our Pulpit orators but little honour, compared with those of the sock and buskin. With the Bible in their hands (I ask their pardon—with Prayer-Books in their hands) which one should think, might touch their hearts and their lips with fire—what do they do? why, they force us, the succeeding day, to the theatre, as a specific for that aguish insensibility, that languid, relaxed suspension of feeling we caught from them; to be roused, to be animated, to be calentured: till the reiterations of the cold and the hot fit, of Sundays and Play-days, so exhaust our intellectual constitutions, and wear away our sapiental powers, that our minds, as well as our bodies, DIE in a *diseased* state; Immortality, alas! as little connected with the one, as with the other; and the choicest alternative that strikes our *last* efforts to will and to chuse, being only the forlorn hope, the miserable wish, NEVER TO RISE. Who can cast the glance of observation on his neighbour, and deny the melancholy fact? who can knock at the portals of his own Conscience, and deny it? I could, from the bottom of my heart, wish it untrue; as an affectionate lover of Humanity; a sincere lover of my King and Country;

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Country; but above all, as a disinterested lover of JESUS CHRIST, and his divine Gospel.

All this arises from a man's not being interested in his Religion; which he never can be, while a set of dignified men among us in black, whom we absolutely keep in pay for imposing on our powers of intelligence, prescribe *what*, and *how much* we ought to believe in Divine Ethics. In the Sciences, Astronomy, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Anatomy, Physiology, had an order of men, incorporate by Law, taken upon them to settle certain elementary Principles, from whence such and such deductions and inferences, and no others, were positively to be drawn; in what situation should our Literati, our Illuminati, be in at this day? why, as profoundly immersed in ignorance as our Pictic or Anglio-Saxon Progenitors; or as absurd, unintelligible, and contradictory, in our notions concerning those capital branches of human knowledge, as we are actually and to all intents and purposes, in our notions concerning God, Jesus Christ, and that most excellent Dispensation he brought with him into the world. Let any one, impartial and honest enough, compare the crude, indigested and ridiculous opinions of mankind, some Centuries ago, with regard to the Heavenly Bodies, the Mechanical Powers, and the circulation of the blood in animals; with the law-enforced Doctrines of Religion, as contained in our Articles and Confessions, at this inglorious day; and if he be not struck with the disgraceful aptitude of the comparison, I am to the last degree mistaken. Nay, so ungracious, so unfriendly are Priestcraft and Priestly Authority, when under no controul, short of their own illiberal superstition, and wretchedness of spirit, that a *certain* Church once interposed her commands to stop the progress of Astronomy in a memorable instance. Galileo, in attempting to introduce the Copernican System, now universally received, was summoned before the Most Holy Inquisition, imprisoned, arraigned, examined, found guilty (of knowing too much) and would certainly have undergone the usual discipline of that horrid tribunal, had he not made a formal recantation of his heresy: the heresy of soaring to the skies, whither his infernal Judges never could soar (*hinc K ille*

illæ lacrymæ) the heresy of mantling himself in solar light, and from the centre of that august luminary, giving his attendant orbs their various degrees of splendence and vicinity, their elipses and circumrotations.

It is true, our Hierarchies at home may lay claim to a degree of merit beyond that of the Roman. While she has suffered, with an astonishing uniformity of conduct, all religious knowledge, all divine Science, to languish in debility and decrepitude, to stand still in turbid stagnation; we must do them the justice to say, they have never immediately or authoratively interfered to stop or retard the progress of Physics and Philosophy: although, in this instance of forbearance they have acted materially against themselves (perhaps without the demerit of intention) for it is in consequence of our amazing discoveries and improvements in *these*, that our eyes have been opened to detect the fallacies and inconsistencies so thickly sown in their Established Systems of Faith. Indeed, if the Leaders of ecclesiastical power in Scotland, under James, before he ascended the throne of England, and the English Inquisition, the Star-Chamber, at a subsequent period, had not received a total abolition; it is hard to say what unforeseen enormous lengths our Clergy might have gone by this time*.—In all ages and nations the spirit of Sacerdotal despotism and encroachment has ever been the same. The pretended Servants of God, when they do turn the Servants of the Devil, always outdo and outrun their MASTERS, in wickedness and iniquity: so true is our Saviour's saying. *Ye cannot serve two Masters: ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* And I am fully convinced, had not the wisdom, equity and moderation of Civil Government, oftentimes indeed in its own self-preservation, interposed, to check the usurpations and tyranny of the Church; all the world at this day should have been in the same wretched deplorable state, the FATHER of mischief and lies rejoiced to see it in the thirteenth Century. The beginnings of Papal darkness and villainy were incomparably less offensive, than the

* See Dr. Robertson's account of the period alluded to, in his truly excellent History of Scotland.

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the Star-Chamber, in the time of the STEUARTS. Would SATAN have withstood the establishment of his own Kingdom? no! Satan never was a drawcanfir. Satan was over-ruled by that HAND, which first, for the very crime of all Church Hierarchies, *spiritual pride*, cast him like a flaming meteor from the skies. Upon the return of the Seventy, Jesus Christ tells them, *He beheld Satan like lightning fall from Heaven*. And thus will it ever be, when matters have come a certain length; that is, when the tyranny of the Priesthood, in a particular state or kingdom, has attained its acme, its *ne plus ultra*: at such a crisis assuredly all tyranny will be overthrown; or in other words, those of our divine Lord, *Satan will be beheld fall like lightning from Heaven*.

Almighty God does not visibly evince his supreme interference in human affairs, till the necessity becomes great and important; that is, till circumstances have drawn to that extreme eventful point, when His and Satan's authority struggles in direct competition: then He unravels in a moment, undoes in the twinkling of an eye, what had been doing for many revolving generations; the mysterious complicated schemes of seducing spirits or devils, and Priests more wicked than they. This circumstance indeed of delay acts, self-deceivingly, as an encouragement upon all Tyrants and Inslavers. One age after another passes away, in the smooth and silent current of time: Seasons upon Seasons renew and exhilarate the face of nature: the sun, the moon, the stars, rise and set regularly in millions of successions, and look delighted and charmed with the world. *Since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation*. Meantime, the machinations of Spiritual Pride and Ambition go on; flattering and flattered; one step of usurpation succeeds another; success and prosperity sits in exultation on the brows of their votaries; while all opposition lies breathless and overpowered, but not conquered, at their feet. The world seems made for Cæsar. But—*All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man, as the flower of grass: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away! The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night*, and it comes, to destroy the works of

the Devil, which he always and chiefly carries on, perfectly wise in his generation (more so even than the children of light) by Spiritual Pride, and Spiritual Ambition.—*Venter non habet animam.*

Satan can never establish a permanent consolidated system of slavery and darkness, without the medium of the Clergy, without interesting them as his tools and instruments; because without interesting the CONSCIENCE, at the portals of which, as watchmen, the Clergy ostensibly stand, he does nothing but trifle with himself: without this, the fetters he claps on to-day may, by a thousand contingences very likely to happen, be taken off to-morrow, and thrown despitefully in his face: but once convince a man's Conscience, by the instrumentality of those who have appointed themselves to oversee it, that God *wills* him to be a slave, *wishes* him to be a slave, and *expects* him to be a slave; Satan has that forlorn and miserable wretch as fast, as everlastingly bound in his chains, as the Pope of Rome ever had a Capuchin Monk, or Benedictine Friar.

And how does he interest the Priesthood to concur with him in his atrocious scheme of blinding, and then subjugating mankind? by those baits and allurements that never yet have been resisted, Riches and Honours: insomuch that I never would desire more solid, more authentic proofs of a Church being Antichrist, giving heed, in the words of St. Paul, to *Seducing Spirits, and the Doctrines of Devils*, expressly predicted of the latter times (what we call modern times) than her being ostentatiously circumstanced, and richly endowed. The Church of Rome is a present striking instance, staring full in our faces, that cannot be denied. What were her high and mighty claims of Infallibility and Supreme Spiritual Jurisdiction, without Riches and Honours to give them credit and eclat? without the inforcement of power? nothing better or more respectable, than a mad raving enthusiast, just broke out from Bedlam, running stark naked through the streets and crying, "I have the keys of St. Peter, I am the rock on which the Church is built, follow me." Would to God I could say Rome Papal is

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the *only* instance. *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas.* Every Church, whose Doctrines and Mode of Worship are inseparably connected, like soul and body, with that exterior constitution, that exhibitory arrangement of offices, expressly condemned and prohibited by God, speaking to mankind by his Son Jesus Christ—What is she? If we are constrained by evidence that cannot be shook off, to call the Pope Antichrist, we must unavoidably, by the same evidence, call *HER* Antichrist also. The degree of resemblance alters not the kind; and we are authorised by an Apostle to admit a plurality of Antichrists. *Even now there are MANY Antichrists.*

The notion of a special singular Antichrist, and positively no more, has, I am certain, been the source of infinite mistake, of ruinous deception: has set our eyes a star-gazing, a comet-staring towards the horizon of modern Rome; when we should have altogether confined them to our own *insular* horizon. That *may* befall a Church, which we are sure befalls Individuals innumerable: to spy the mote in our neighbour's eye, while we quite forget the beam in our own. Let us very shortly examine St. John's distinctive appropriate mark of Antichrist. I know this is a subject hateful to our eyes, and insurgent against the desire of our hearts. What then? on this very account it is the more likely to be just and well founded. Every thing that strikes agreeably on our senses, and passes by this medium to our internal prejudices, too easily and too flatteringly, I would always be apt to suspect as not genuine or sterling. The baser the metal or counterfeit coin, and the deeper the forgery, the higher, generally speaking, the burnish of the one, and the more masterly the graphic execution of the other. The very causes of detection were too inconsiderable to strike the exquisite, but felonious Artist. I also know that Church-writers, in the first class of fame and learning, have lived, have died, in a long and numerous succession, without the most distant persuasion of the kind; nay, to a man have directed the flight of the *STIGMA* to Italy. What then? they are all interested judges, absolute judges in their own Cause, which neither the laws of God or man ever permit. I would set them *ALL* aside for the same equitable

ble reason, that *Parties concerned* are always set aside in judicial trials of Life and Property. It rests upon Truth's firmest rock and broadest bottom. Were such persons not set aside, no one would ever be condemned, and no one consequently ever secure of his life or property.

And here with the honest feelings of a man and a Christian, let me lament the singular unhappiness of the Established Church. In combating her oppugners, in this important matter, she cannot put on the armour of the meanest Christian unallied to her Communion; she cannot, she dare not appeal to the BIBLE. The Apostle Paul thus admonishes the Soldier of Jesus Christ. *Take unto you the whole armour of God; the breast-plate of righteousness; the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: having your loins girt about with truth; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.* Now, why does he admonish the Christian Warrior to put on this suit of armour, a completer or more glorious than which never warrior wore? Because, says he, *we wrestle not against flesh and blood* (the private vices and corruptions of mankind) *but against Principalities, against Powers; against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in High Places* †. Alas! the pitiable contrast ought at once to overwhelm us! The Established Church, instead of having Principalities and Powers and the Rulers of the darkness of this world AGAINST her; has them all at her back; countenancing her Decrees and enforcing her Doctrines. The unavoidable inference then is (we must make use of it, however reluctantly) that she has totally disqualified herself from putting on or using THIS DIVINE ARMOUR.

I am aware, it will immediately be replied, that when St. Paul wrote, Kings and Emperors and the Rulers of this world were universally Pagans and Idolaters; but now the case is entirely altered, Kings, Emperors, and Rulers being Christians, baptized and solemnly sworn; nay more, the very nursing Fathers of the Church.

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† Ephesians vi. 12.

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Let us examine the validity of this plea, which has no less extraordinary an effect than perfectly to satisfy the minds and consciences of a great national Body. No one would be happier to bring off, with decency and credit, a number of worthy men, belonging to that Body, than the writer, could it possibly be done. But my coolest and most favourable opinion is, if we are to abide by the Authority of Scripture, and of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, it cannot be done. The plea in substance only amounts to that sort of ambo-dexteral wisdom, that accommodated policy, which would fondly answer two wished-for purposes at once ; to perpetuate to us the possession of those privileges, dignities and emoluments, we already enjoy as members of the Hierarchy ; and, at the same time, guarantee to us the honourable consciousness of our own minds ; satisfy that restless Principle within us, implanted there by the finger of God, which ever and anon would faithfully, sometimes obtrusively, put us in mind of our deserted duty. Alas ! alas ! the voice of the *former* is the voice of the Charmer, that charms never but sweetly ; beckoning, in all her roseat bloom and bewitching negligence, from her Calypsone grots, and amaranthyne arcades : the *latter* too much analogous to an *appearing* monitor from the invisible world, or to the too eloquent *writing on the wall*. The former melts and ravishes us ; the latter chills our blood to stagnation, and incrusts our nerves to icicles : no wonder then, our views not stretching beyond the verge of present enjoyment, we fly abhorrent from the one, and rush into the arms of the other. *Homines sumus, non Dii.*

It has ever been the misfortune and the fault of the Established Church, to be local and uncomprehensive in her spirit. She has set herself down so snugly in a corner of the world, regaling with luxurious lip on her own dainties, her delicacies ; not such simple fare as loaves and fishes, with which our Lord and his train were sufficed ; that she really looks upon herself as the Universal Church. Universal indeed she is in one particular—want of Charity. Emblazoned by the State in a little insular spot of the globe, what is she better than a diamond on the turband

ban of a Sultan, instead of exulting in the pre-sentiment of shining one day in the firmament of Heaven, *like stars for ever and ever*, in consequence of *having turned many to righteousness*.

It is true, GEORGE is a Christian king ; nay, deserves the title, *Most Christian*, much better than a certain brother Monarch ; consequently, against him the Church has no need to put on the whole armour of God. I sincerely love George III. as my king ; nay, revere him under his spiritual title, *The Defender of the Faith*, originally granted to a far *other* Prince. What then ? The king of Great-Britain is but one individual. How many potentates, how many rulers of nations and people, are yet Pagans, yet turn their backs on the true God, and worship in temples of Idolatry ? In comparison with each other, the latter is no less numerous than the pecuniary emoluments of the Church, compared to her FULFILLED duties of Christianity. To face these, with the true Apostolical spirit of diffusing the Gospel, in the vast Southern, Northern, and Eastern regions of the Earth ; which the Day-spring from on high, the Sun of Righteousness, has never yet visited, would not the Church require to put on the whole armour of God, with all its enumerated appendages, beyond the embossments of an Achilles's coat of mail ?—doubtless she would, as she should then, in the strictest sense, have to *wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers ; against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places*.

What is it then that prevents her, as she has christened herself the most excellent of all the Protestant Reformed Churches, and insinuates in black Capitals that the Right of Ordination remains only in her hands ? This is a very important, a very solemn question ; which I would propose, with all befitting humility, to the most learned of her Academic Sons : nor shall I be averse to enter the lists with any she shall pitch upon, as her champion to palliate her base remissness and negligence ; provided he be contented, as I fully am, with the *Bible and Common Sense*, as his Seconds ; not very fashionable ones, it is
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Should a St. Peter, or St. Paul, clothed in the filthy rags of mortality, once more visit our Earth, to know what progress Christianity had made since their departure from it, how would they be astonished and aggrieved, to find it cooped up in a small islandic cluster ! clad in fine linen and faring sumptuously every day ! dandled on the knee of voluptuous ease, or throwing her facile cheeks into the smiles and simpers of a drawing-room !—These two spirited divinely-inspired Apostles once already underwent the ordeal trial : they never did any thing culpable enough to be punished by God in so signal and exemplary a manner, as by such a visit they should be. They are in Heaven, enjoying that elevated happiness and glory which their blessed Master promised them : and methinks it is consonant to the perfection of that enjoyment to take it for granted, they have not the knowledge of what passes below. Could any thing possibly embitter the relish of Paradise, or cast a shadow of eclipse on its *super-solar* illumination, it would be *that* knowledge.—Truly melancholy it is, that Christianity for more than a century past is little better than a parrot in a cage, muttering over, so often as he is called upon, his well-recollected RESPONSES, mumbling his bit of pye-crust, suspended in his ring, playing with the gilded wires of his imprisonment, or twirling them into vibratory tinkles : so importantly occupied with this long-accustomed rotation of business, that he has utterly lost all reminiscence of his nature, his having wings, capable of bearing him far beyond the reach of his lordly soothing jailors, and of carrying him towards Heaven.

The Church of God, that moment she becomes stationary, becomes also valetudinary and consumptive in her Constitution ; like the human body deprived of exercise and the circulation of wholesome air. Art well directed may preserve to her a degree of non-natural health, and she herself may be deceived by that floridness, nay delicacy of bloom, which often attends consumptive habits : she may scientifically take her cordials, her demulcents, her balsamics, her sweetners, her anodynes—what then ?
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these are but the succedaneums of soundness, of sanity, but do not constitute or restore either. The morbid caule, internally and deeply seated, passes from one vital organ to another, destroying as it goes; mortally depascent on the vigour of every nerve, the tonic life of every fibre.— With the fallacious flattery of gaining ground, and renewing her constitutional strength, she totters on the last legs of decay, looks wishingly forlorn at her friends, languishingly attached to every object around her; excites every one's sigh of compassion, every one's tear of pity, but her own; talks falteringly, yet with unaffected confidence of to-morrow, and again of to-morrow, but—to-day she dies.

It is a strange infatuation to suppose that any thing can preserve or support a Church, in continuance, other than what first gave it being and validity. If we recur to the times of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, which we must do to form a just judgment, we shall find that almost every circumstance of confirmation and durance quite the reverse of what now takes place, took place *then*, although, respecting both periods every thing, excepting miracles, should be perfectly the same. A determined boldness and a generous assiduity to extend and perennialize the privileges and blessings of the Gospel, formed the grand and leading out-line of their characters. When they were not thus immediately and urgently engaged, we find them men of the utmost plainness and simplicity; singularly humble, modest and self-denied; exhibiting uniform patterns of all the humane, gentle, amiable virtues; susceptible of the softest tenderness, the kindest dispositions to forbear and forgive; at once soothing and unflattering; bluntly honest and considerate; searching the hearts of men, but solacing them at the same time: above all, we find them steadily and perseveringly superior to this world; keeping always at a distance from its temptations, its honours, its pleasures, and inculcating upon all around them, a like manly contempt and noble indifference.

How strange a misconception of Jesus Christ should it seem, to imagine he can be gratified, be delighted with that staid round of external Service, that dry mechanical
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repetition of duty in public Edifices, to discountenance and terminate which was one of the professed ends of his coming into the world ! Otherwise, to what purpose did he live ? did he die ? did he ascend into Heaven ? If we think to honour and serve Almighty God, as the Jews did, by engaging his attention to our paltry, our insignificant rites and ceremonies ; what are we better than Jews ? and if no better than Jews, which demonstrably is the case, our pretending to be Christians is the boldest mockery, and the vilest affectation : we are expressly among the number of those who *confess* NOT *that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* ; which St. John declares is the guilt and demerit of Antichrist.

Princes and civil Governors have their eyes and ears tickled by the pompous returns, the flattering reiterations of lingual respect, and verbal homage ; a mere unsentimental display of common place compliment and courtesy ; quite sufficient, it is acknowledged, to elevate the royal brow with vanity, and swell with importance the monarch's high-beating heart : but to what shall we or may we compare them, when applied to the Supreme Being. *He who dwells not in temples made with hands ?* to a solemn audience demanded of the Lion, the Majesty of the forest, by a congregation of grasshoppers, chirping from the ground ; or a not less respectable congregation of frogs, croaking from the mud.

Our stated Public Service, as it is wont to be performed, appears to me a downright indignity and insult offered the DIVINE MAJESTY. We mutter out and responsive his praises with the artificial utterance and unfeelingness of parrots, as before observed ; we leave our Churches as little impressed, as little instructed, as the rabble-rout listening to the paroquet in the window, with idle avidity and unmeaning stare. The Temple-worship of the Jews degenerated into the same verbose inanity, the same labial delusion, and *therefore* was destroyed. To merit a similar destruction, shall a similar lip-service or gesticular devotion, be continued and ostentatiously extolled, among us, at so advanced a period of the Christian Era ? Methinks this matter has been universally and grossly mistaken. I
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Speak it with all becoming deference for many great and good men ; and am ready to enter into the argument, at full length, with any writer on the opposite side, that will engage in the discussion with temper, moderation and decorum ; any writer that will consent to rest his Cause solely upon Reason, and the plain obvious Word of God, independent of all considerations whatever, merely deduced from the Authority of *his* Church, Tradition, General Councils or Primitive Fathers. His Church, Tradition, General Councils, Primitive Fathers, must stand or fall THEMSELVES by the all-unerring decision of Reason ; so that they cannot possibly set aside Reason, much less exhibit any documents or proofs superior to this godlike faculty. As well might a person arraigned at the bar, and presenting himself to a judicial hearing, set aside his judge and his jury.

It has always occurred to me, after the most serious and deliberate attention to the Subject, that one main end of the Christian Dispensation was to exterminate, for ever, all Hierarchies and Establishments ; to transfer Religion from the hands of the *few*, into the hands of the *many* ; to render it a general common blessing, and not a local partial one. Was Religion taken out of the hands of the Jews, to be translated to Rome, France, England or Scotland, in the same gaudy Temple trappings, and circumstances of parade ? The idea dishonours God, and renders the Mission of Jesus Christ absolutely unnecessary. For what better is any of these modern kingdoms, now called Christians, than that of the Jews ? Nay, are they not incomparably in a lower scale of desert, inasmuch as, with all their amazing opportunities and means of essential improvement ; in Doctrines they are as absurdly dark and mysteriously bewildered, as the Jews were of old, in their jurisdictional capacity, and established police, as pitifully contracted, uncharitable and unrelenting ? What then is the just and unavoidable deduction ? That they all lean on the same rotten, unscriptural, antichristian basis ; and contain within themselves the principles of their own certain destruction ; which, in process of time, will assuredly, assuredly as the God of truth is true, disincorporate and scatter them into original nothingness. *One day is with*

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These several Kingdoms denying authority and genuineness to each other, and each abstractedly assuming them, in its own exterior support and aggrandizement, renders them all justly suspectable and unworthy of credit. Each swearing and subscribing solemnly in defence of its own credibility, proves, in the most disparaging sense, that oaths and subscriptions are necessary to render them worthy to be believed and trusted ; so that the truth of Revelation, among them, is made to depend upon simple verbal asseveration, and, of course, the boldest, forwardest swearer is ever the most likely to hit on the truth : moreover, they swear and subscribe directly contrary to one another, with regard to the very article of their existence or perennialization. Here then is a clashing of oaths, the major and the minor in avowed opposition. How shall we determine the claim of veracity among them, so strenuously, but so differently asserted? undoubtedly in the same manner by which our verdict is conducted, with regard to individuals swearing oppositely at a bar of justice ; we must recur to the character and common fame of the deponents ; and give no credit whatsoever to any witness that has not THESE particularly in his favour. The *lex ultima judicandi*.

On no other ground would I consider the Churches of England or Scotland intitled to belief or confidence, beyond those of Rome or Portugal. But in this eminent discriminating sense they are all alike disqualified, as Evidences and Witnesses, as their external circumstances of endowment and hierarchial remuneration, act upon them all as bribes and douceurs, amounting to actual subornation ; therefore, ought to set them all aside.

These inferences would seem self-evinced, and quite level to common apprehension. Nothing can possibly overturn them but what, at the same time, is directly calculated to overturn the justice and integrity of God, in destroying the Jewish Dispensation, in order to erect others on the same narrow bottom and contracted foundation.

tion. But the Gospel took place of the Jewish Dispensation, as a more **EXCELLENT SYSTEM**. Wherefore more excellent? because more unrespecting and unconfined. The Religious Doctrines of Christianity and those of the Jews are precisely the same, two only excepted. First, The belief of Christ being come in the flesh, that is, personally appearing in our world; in consequence of which, all restricted formularies, merely ritual and ceremonial, should seem for ever prohibited: and secondly, The *New Commandment, of loving one another*; that is, all mankind loving one another, as Christian friends, disciples and brethren; the Servants of one Master; the Children of one Father, and the Subjects of one Creator; not certain individuals, particularly circumstanced, locally and partially loving one another, otherwise alas! most emphatically hating one another.

The following texts of Scripture prove this incontestably. *Whosoever confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. A new Commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.* The requisition of believing other Doctrines, is the requisition of mortals like ourselves, that would plunge us into the ignorance, superstition and will-worship of the Jews: by which alone they forfeited the divine favour, and *the sceptre departed from Judah*. No Doctrines of Religion, however emblazoned in Articles and Confessions, have either existence or propriety, that do not immediately terminate in love to God, and love to man: Love—the fulfilment of the Law, and the distinguishing badge of Christ's Disciples. *By this shall all men know that ye are MY disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

That whole bodies of learned and eminent men should, for ages, have thought differently from the writer, on such subjects, is nothing at all extraordinary, when we consider they were all the while only *praising themselves*, their own association; and were acting under the immediate influence of temporal emoluments, which, by a contrary procedure, they should most certainly have forfeited. How many blinded sleepy ages revolved in perfect
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unanimity of belief, in sympathetic conformity of *meum* and *tuum*, before mankind, were blest with a CLARKE, a HOADLY ; the one defending the Unity of God, in opposition to the impious and arbitrary Decree of Constantine ; the other defending the Divine Right of Private Judgment, in opposition to the lawless tyrannical spirit of the Priesthood !—The liberality, disinterestedness, hardihood, and perseverance of these two distinguished individuals, have often astonished me ; till I reflected that they were supported by a Power superior to mortality, as the instruments of Divine Providence (like the Prophets of old) to remonstrate against the enormous abuses introduced into the Temple of God. Nothing less indeed could have preserved to them their fame, character and situations in life. The established Clergy, almost to a man, with the most imbibed spirit of Persecution, combined against them. They were preparing to call them before their Tartarian tribunal, the Anglican Inquisition, the Houses of Convocation ; where, without doubt, had they not turned out unfaithful to their own minds, they would have been condemned and degraded : but Almighty God interposed, by putting it into the heart of a wise and prudent Prince, to restrain their detestable violence, and dismiss them authoritatively from their seats as Judges. I never think of these lawless and atrocious men, but I recollect our Saviour's remarkable reply to Peter (our illustrious Divines and their Persecutors well exemplified) *Lo, Satan desired to sift thee as wheat ; but I have prayed that thy faith fail not.*

Struck with that internal light (I am persuaded from above) which can no more be resisted, by the eye of the mind, than solar light by the corporeal eye ; did these truly excellent Personages pierce the gloom of System, and throw off the shackles, the inglorious shackles of Establishment. Their writings have laid a foundation for that privilege of thinking, that freedom of enquiry, which must one day prove fatal to the Hierarchy. Their authority undoubtedly should outweigh that of the whole English Church ; inasmuch as they had the divine boldness to declare and publish their opinions in opposition to their interests and appointments. Self-denial, and a dignified
superiority

superiority to this world, are the only genuine tests of Truth. A body of Clergymen asserting and defending what they are sworn and hired to assert and defend, strikes me in no more important venerable a light, than a body of Lawyers pleading at the bar, in consequence of having received their fees. The authority therefore of CLARKE, of HOADLY, must be a species of authority inspired immediately by God ; as it rests confessedly on no human mortal prop, but *fight against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world; and against spiritual wickedness in high places.* To contend against which requires *the whole armour of God ; the breast-plate of righteousness ; the shield of faith ; the helmet of salvation ; the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God ; the loins girt about with truth, and the feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*—Such was their complete and impenetrable coat of armour. No wonder all the missile weapons of Establishment, all the Artillery of the Church, served by the ablest engineers, charge upon charge, and volley after volley, have been directed against it, but directed in vain. The arrows and javelins of half a century have never been able even to pierce its surface ; every one of them a—*telum imbelles sine ictu.*

It is no wonder it should be so :—all Establishments fight with far other than these glorious weapons from the armoury of God. *Sed impar congressus Achilli.* Their weapons are merely carnal. Fines, imprisonments, deprivations, incapacitations, censures, penalties, excommunications, &c. Deprive them of these, and you leave them utterly destitute, impotent, and defenceless : the cocatrice deprived of its venom, and the scorpion of its lash. *If my kingdom were of this world* (says Jesus Christ) *then would my servants fight for me.* All Establishments absolutely fight in defence of THEIR kingdom ; therefore their kingdom is not that of Jesus Christ, nor are they his servants. If the one be true, the other must be true also. But how singularly disgraceful to fight with weapons similar to those by which robbers secure their property, and usurpers their dominion !

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This circumstance accounts too effectually for the Gospel of Christ making so inconsiderable an advance in modern times. The Sons of violence, persecution and rapine, our Bishops, Deans, and Doctors, have laid forcible hands on it; have restrained its benign, placid, generous, and amiable spirit; while they would bully and menace us into Christianity, I mean *their* Christianity; otherwise load us with the blackest epithets of odium and abuse; call us heretics, schismatics, deists, Infidels, &c. &c. Our only consolation (not a small one) the negative of our Saviour's declaration in these words, *Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you.* This Anti-christian and, let me call it, diabolical temper of the Priesthood, the Bench of Bishops, ever hostile from time immemorial to the heaven-originated idea of Human Liberty, fully evinced on a recent memorable occasion, when solicited in behalf of certain Christian Brethren, every way their equals, except in chariots and liveries, which the most worthless and abandoned ride in every day: anxious, it should seem, to have Ezekiel's signal denunciation against the Priesthood exemplified in their PERSONS, *Wo be to the Shepherds of Israel: ye eat the fat and clothe ye in the wool, but ye do not feed the flock; but with FORCE and with CRUELTY have ye ruled them!*

With seats in Parliament, Mitres on their heads, and rolling along in their Chariots, it would seem that Bishops think themselves an order of beings above mortality, and above being accountable—not considering, that their first aggrandizement and opulence were purchased by the basest desertion of their Master, equal to the treason of Judas who betrayed him; not considering, that the richer and greater they are, they become less and less the servants and disciples of Jesus Christ; being in fact nothing better than a peculiar class of High Priests, dignified and richly caparisoned, burning incense at the altar of the God of this world. I mean a sort of Trinitarian or tripartite Deity of their own; POWER, WEALTH and HONOUR; than which a more piously, a more fervently, a more constantly adored Trinity, never filled the immensity of a Creed or a Confession.

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It is everlastingly memorable, that when the renowned Dr. CLARKE entered his protest against the Athanasian triad of Supreme Beings, he, at the same time, with the ennobled, divine Spirit of his Lord and Master, protested as gloriously against the other darling Episcopal Trinity, *Power, Wealth and Honour*. From the coolest deliberation, the most Apostolical correctness of sentiment, he refused a Bishopric, repeatedly refused it, though in the kindest and most courteous manner pressed upon him by his Sovereign. He was illuminated by inspiration from above, and deeply struck with this affirmation of his Saviour. *Ye cannot serve two Masters—God and Mammon—Christ and Belial.*—In proportion as the Heads and Governors of the Hierarchy shall be struck sympathetically in the same way, in proportion will they withdraw their support from the spurious unintelligible Doctrines of Creeds and Articles; which can only be supported by *mere* Power and Authority; being in themselves perfectly independent of the superintendency of Almighty God, and of his Son Jesus Christ.

It is impossible that any set of men, above the dignity of Oran Otangs, could subject themselves to patronize a system of Doctrines so supremely ridiculous (because belying and contravening each other) as those contained in the Anglican Articles of Religion, and the Scottish Confession of Faith, if they were not bribed and paid for so doing: we know for certain it has been the approbrium of our Species, since the origin of Society and Government, that scarcely one in many thousands has had virtue and integrity to resist the fascinating lure of a BRIBE.—Bribes, well timed and well managed, have been the omnipotent means of effecting revolutions, overthrowing polices, systems and governments, in every nation in Europe; which otherwise should never have felt corruption or lapse, immoveable as the poles of the world and the axis of the earth. The infernal temptation of a Bribe precipitated Judas to betray his Master: and ever since the time of Judas, the same infernal temptation of Bribes, acting upon Popes, Cardinals and Bishops of all denominations, has fatally continued to betray Jesus Christ

Christ into the hands of sinners and wicked men. What is it to betray a Friend? a Benefactor? Surely to dispossess him of his personal privileges and property, to take away from him his proper independence and freedom, and put him into thralldom and durance to another.—Now, all Establishments of the Clergy have committed, since the days of Constantine, this guilty outrage upon Jesus Christ; whom, degraded and insulted as he is, they effect sarcastically to call their Master; as Judas formerly did, by a similar right. They have betrayed him to Courts and Parliaments, by transferring his legislative authority, in spiritual matters, to kings and courtiers; his blessed and holy Religion (which only thrives, pure and unspotted, in retirement and in the closet) changed, altered and new-modeled by a Majority in Parliament, hanging on the broidered sleeve of a Minister, and only made to move and act, like the torpid snake, within artificial calenture.—Jesus Christ cannot be crucified a second time; but he may, nay he actually has been betrayed into the hands of *the Rulers of the darknes of this world*, a thousand and ten thousand times. If our Bishops and Church Governors have it not in their power to imbrue their hands in his immaculate blood, they certainly year after year, and session succeeding session, act in the capacity of Herod's *men of war*, *set him at nought, mock him and array him in a gorgeous robe*. Or with the rabble soldiery, *clotbe him with purple, plait a crown of thorns and put it about his head; smite him; spit upon him; and mockingly bowing the knee, salute him, hail king of the Jews!*

In how strong a light of literal illustration is the contrast set by our Clergy! In their Litanies they have deified Jesus Christ; placed him on a line of equality with the Supreme God; and *bowing the knee, worship him*: yet they have withdrawn their allegiance from him as their Master, and the Head of the Church; and transferred it to the Rulers of this World, in effect adopting these words of the Jews at his condemnation before Pilate. *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar*. And afterwards, when Pilate replied, *shall I crucify your king?* The Chief Priests answered, in the true language of our

modern Bishops. WE HAVE NO KING BUT CESAR*.
 —Furthermore, our Bishops have not only recognized MORTALS like themselves, as kings, in ecclesiastical matters supremely jurisdictional over them, in the room of Jesus Christ, but they have seats as Barons in that very Senate-House, where the degradation of their LORD and MASTER from his spiritual Royalty and Supremacy is actually registered: to be stationary witnesses of his disgrace and humiliation. Oh shame! where has the episcopal blush hid itself for so many Centuries?—*Why call ye me Lord! Lord! and do not the things which I say?*
 —And what says the Author and finisher of our faith? *He that DENIETH me before men; he shall be denied before the Angels of God†.*

When I see our Prelates hying to the Parliament House, to settle the police, politics and revenues of the nation; how am I astonished with the idea of dissimilitude between them and their divine, but forsaken Master, who when he was solicited to adjust a matter of property between two competitors, uses these remarkable words. *Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?*—For becoming Judges and Dividers, in opposition to the example of their Master, methinks it should seem but a poor compensation, to be used only as a political dead weight in the Patrician scale; as easily turned about by the Minister, as he turns him on his heel, or turns around the court-bred waisture of his smile.

Princes and Ministers of state take the Clergy as they find them, flexible, versatile and obsequious: and who can blame our political Guardians for making the most they possibly can of Right Reverend weight and influence, seeing their views of expedience and jurisprudence all terminate in Civil Government, and extend not beyond this world? Priests of all denominations, from the Creation of the world until this present era, have ever been useful engines and necessary implements in the hands of kings and emperors. Superstition overawes and enslaves the Mind of man; the Clergy are the source and cause of

* John xix. 15. *et supra.*

† Luke xii. 9.

of superstition. Hence their signal utility to every State, that would be permanent and impregnable ; for when the mind is in spiritual durance, personal subjugation is a thing of course. This is the true key to Dr. Warburton's Alliance between Church and State. At once it opens its (otherwise mysterious) meaning, in the following explicit declaration to kings and courtiers. Grant us (the Clergy) personal gratuities *in perpetuum* ; titles, honours, distinctions and revenues ; and we will push forward every scheme, lend a shoulder of aid to every endeavour, thought necessary to secure the grandeur and stability of Government, and the minions of Government.

Here is, it must be confessed, one part of our Saviour's precept fulfilled. Render unto Cesar the things that be Cesar's. But where shall we look for the fulfilment of the latter part, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT BE GOD'S ? If we wish to find it out, we must turn our eye from all Establishments, and fix them on Jesus Christ, his blessed Apostles, the Confessors and Martyrs of the two first ages of Christianity, with a few other select illustrious individuals, in several nations, who followed their divine footsteps, and did not bow the knee to BAAL ; that is, were totally unconnected by confederation, or as a now Right Reverend Prelate would loftily style it, ALLIANCE with the State. The Bishop of Gloucester, however he may AFTERWARDS fare with regard to *the Crown of Glory, the Diadem of Immortality*, in Heaven ; has certainly insured the fixture, at least, if not the easiness, of the mitre on his head in this world. And has he not his Lord's commands to rest satisfied to-day however he may be to-morrow. *Take no thought of the morrow : sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

As men and members of the body politic, where riches and honours always give distinction and secure respect ; I am not at all surprized that the Clergy should with so much painful and restless solicitude, contend for their revenues and tithes : but as the Priests of God, and Servants of the Sanctuary, that they should not have wisdom and piety enough to conceal and keep under this painful and restless solicitude ; not only excites my strongest

est surprize, but my most compassionate concern for their forfeited fame and character. Alas! they attend not for a moment to the first origination of their tithes and pecuniary appointments! that they were profusely heaped upon them without propriety or decorum, and to reward that ductility and obsequiousness in their conduct, which not only degraded them, as the servants and disciples of Jesus Christ; but forced them, unavoidably, to humour and countenance the vices, follies, and corruptions of their Benefactors, civil rulers and governors! —As preachers and propagators of the Gospel, they had no appropriated salaries or emoluments; a regulation arising from that idea of divine and prudential rectitude which never mistakes. Their subsistence and accommodation depended wholly on the largesse and hospitality of the different classes of people among whom they taught and ministered. Had it been otherwise, that is, had they been in the possession of fixt annual revenues, the Gospel of Christ, I fear, never should have been preached or propagated at all.—They would, instead of this, have set down pleasureably at their ease, and enjoyed from generation to generation what they then had got; and never would have exposed themselves, their dainty bodies and constitutions to the hardships, miseries and dangers, so emphatically enumerated by St. Paul, of spreading the glad-tidings of Salvation among rude and barbarous nations, Heathens and Pagans, hostile both to them and their Religion. In short, the first preachers of Christianity should have been precisely what our Clergy are *now*; enjoying in a small corner of the earth, among those only that just pay them tithes, their ill-gotten wealth and honours; in return for which their whole merit and duty consist in vain repetitions of long public prayers, expressly condemned by our Saviour: in a stated superstitious observance of paltry Rites and Ceremonies, as insignificant in themselves, as directly subversive of personal sentimental holiness, the true *Gospel of Christ*.

The labourer is worthy of his wages—doubtless. But there must always be an equitable proportion between the labour and the pay. Beside, who are to be the judges of the work and the reward due to that work? Surely, the

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the people among whom the workmen are employed. If I engage a gardener in my olitory, or a plowman to turn up my land, I only give each of them exactly according to the work done ; nor do I permit any man, or set of men, to interfere between me and my labourers. To ascend in the scale of comparison. When I employ a lawyer or a physician, in consultation about my property or the state of my health, I see each proportionably to the length and degree of his trouble. I should never think of keeping them annually in pay for haranguing on the importance and usefulness of their respective Professions, at my table or in my drawing-room. Would the Clergy assume prerogatives or privileges beyond the learned and liberal faculties of Law and Physic? How utterly inexcusable are they if they would ! The advice and assistance of Lawyers and Physicians relate to objects confessedly restricted to this world ; to secure the tenure of our possessions, and add a healthful relish to our constitutional enjoyments. How natural, how consistent then to reward them munificently out of these very blessings and external comforts which they are the immediate instruments of realizing and preserving to us!—On the contrary, the Clergy are a society of men, by ostensible profession connected with another world, whose special singular office it is to teach, by their lessons of wisdom, and exemplify by the uniformity of their practice, a constant superiority to the temptations and captivating good things of this life ; to wain our well-regulated affections from them, and to qualify and prepare our spirits for another and better state. How preposterous and ill advised therefore, to lavish those identical good things, those means of pleasure and gratification on men, whose professed business it is to guard us against their insinuating and fatal effects ! This is deranging the whole order and oeconomy of instruction, by strangely attempting to reconcile *God and Mammon ; Christ and Belial ;* beside powerfully (alas ! too powerfully) seducing our Teachers to be as bad and as wicked as ourselves.

But however the Laity may be disposed to act this unaccountable incongruous part ; is this a reason that our spiritual guides and teachers should be as alertly ready to catch

catch at a temptation as the Laity to offer it? Not only passionately still to accept of it when offered, but also when it is not offered, to solicit it, nay to insist on it as their right? Surely, there is an absurdity here too magnitudinous to be concealed within the circlet of a mitre or the foldings of a surplice. The Clergy coveting, begging and engrossing those very things that irresistibly disqualify them for their function and their duty, nay, in the result, turn them into downright farce and ridicule, is a mystery of conduct not less inexplicable than their other mysteries of Doctrine. One mystery begets another; and the former mystery accounts for the latter. As the Clergy have left their own conduct and character utterly void of developement, on the principles of common prudence and common sense; it is little wonder they labour to involve the conduct and character of Almighty God and of his Son Jesus Christ, in the same mysterious unaccountableness. Guiltily wrapping themselves round in mystery with their Maker and their Saviour, they avowedly mean to impress the illiterate, vulgar, superstitious mind (always favourable to Priestcraft) with the interested notion that what affects them, equally affects God and Jesus Christ. But this bold unwarrantable approximation of interests, this mercenary, enormous plea of alliance between Heaven and the Priesthood, may be at once reduced to inanity, by the simplest exertion of Right Reason; not less easily than a rope of cobwebs be blown away by a breath of the mouth. The issue of the whole is this; that Almighty God, and his blessed Son Jesus Christ, are *light itself, and in them are no darkness at all*; and that their pretended Servants, our Bishops, Church Governors and dignified Divines, are *darkness itself, and in them is no light at all: they loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*. The Sun and the mists that hover in his beam, and would hide his glory from mortal eye, can never be the same; unless in this particular, that where the one is, luminous and exhilarating, the other eventually are also. *Quis unquam in sole ambulavit absque umbra?*

The writer would have it understood here, that in the foregoing Strictures, he only considers the Clergy as an aggregate

aggregate Body, impropriating to themselves established hereditary possessions which, as the Agents of the invisible world, the consecrated flamens of Immortality, an order of men set apart by Almighty God, to exemplify the excellence, purity and holiness of that Dispensation revealed by his Son; they are neither intitled to, nor can lawfully or consistently hold in perpetuity. If they are content to pass only as the peculiar Servants of the State, in black livery, as a successful enginry to carry on the work and business of that State; I would neither censure their appointments, nor envy their possession of them. They only stand in the predicament of other men officially employed. But let them not pretend to be of divine Institution; the representatives of Jesus Christ and his Apostles; who both by their example and precept discouraged and prohibited their uniting with the powers of this world. Their whole history and writings manifest this in the most express and convincing terms. By uniting, they must of necessity act in concert with the powers of this world; otherwise the union would be immediately dissolved. The State is too sagacious and too watchfully attentive to her own interests, ever to hold a class of men strictly connected with her, if, in consequence of this, her measures should be thwarted and her designs rendered abortive. In such a case, the Head or Minister of the State would no more hesitate to dismiss them for ever from his favour, than he hesitates to dismiss other officers or servants from their posts and employments. The fact then demonstrably proves that they act in unison and sympathy with each other, and carry on one common concerted plan. The Church has her honours and revenues guaranteed to her; and the State daily encreases in profligacy and corruption, notwithstanding our streets are blackened with Clergymen: and no doubt will continue to increase, till Almighty God breaks the unnatural bonds assunder; separates *light from darkness, and Christ from Belial.*

This fatal and ignominious confederation of the Church and State is the true, but melancholy reason why Christianity has made so little progress for many centuries past. The Church fondled on the knee of kings and courtiers, thinks of nothing but dalliance, delight and gratification.

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Like all other PETs, she has got her lesson and rhyme by heart, and chaunts them prettily over to her *Superiors*; following her, in episcopal vestments, to stated places of resort, to hear, with velvet utterance and honied accent, the wonders of the ANGLICAN Gospel rehearsed; and not seldom laughing in their sleeve to observe with what extreme facility the Clergy make their breeding and duty to coincide, by invariably adopting that famous maxim of St. Paul's—BECOMING ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.

The Church Established, instead of being in affliction and adversity, the predicted state to the end of the world, as repeatedly mentioned by himself, of Christ's Church; is evidently in her jubilee, her galaxy of splendor; feasting and feasted among the great and the mighty; walking to her temples with triumphal parade; bells ringing as she advances majestic, and organs, upon her sitting down, clothed in cambric and silks, saluting her with their finely imagined voluntaries. How charming, how exquisite a method of getting to Heaven! You have all the powdered company of a levee or an Assembly-room around you! nothing but brilliance, taste and fashion! rich equipages, embroidered dresses, and ornamented pews! carpets from the Levant, lining from the Asiatic loom, and windows decorated with the most gorgeous paintings! Communion tables, pulpits, desks, Bibles, Prayer books, covered with turkey, bordered, fringed and tasselled with gold! Who would wish a more delightful, a more flattering way of taking up our Cross and following Jesus Christ! Methinks Heaven can scarcely be a finer place, I am sure the theatre is not, I am sure the Pantheon is not! Doubtless we have been guilty of a wonderful Anachronism: the Millenium is surely begun! Jesus Christ indeed is not personally among us. What then? Jesus Christ never made so distinguished a figure as our Prelates and Deans. Beside, how strangely did Jesus Christ express himself to his Disciples and Followers! *You shall be hated of all men for my sake and the Gospel's. In the world ye shall have tribulation!*—How sad a reverse of the above exquisite, the above captivating scene!

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Whoever consults his Bible, with the same fairness and careful attention with which he consults a Grecian or Roman History, without being previously attached to any favourite Religious System, will scarcely think the writer has expressed himself with too much asperity or indignation against Establishments of all kinds, whether those beyond, or those within the British Channel. They are all alike avowedly inimical to the purity, simplicity, obviousness, and universality of the Gospel. Which of them is most truly, most dangerously so, is a topic of local discussion better adapted to the members and champions of each, as they act immediately under pay to their respective employers, than to a liberal, unshackled, unsubscribing, unforsworn Disciple of *Jesus Christ*. For such an one it is quite sufficient, from the evidence of Reason, and that detail of clear positive proofs exhibited in the sacred Writings, to be convinced, in the most satisfactory manner, that, in the aggregate, all these so admired and renowned Churches carry on designs and push forward Schemes plainly inconsistent with the genius and spirit of Christianity: that they have renounced the divine authority of those excellent and inspired Personages, that first introduced and established the Christian Dispensation; and, of course, that they have, one and all of them, been reduced to the pitiful and forlorn necessity of calling in, to their protection and support, the powers and authority of this world, the arm of flesh and the civil sword; in direct independence and defiance of which, the Gospel of Christ was clearly predicted to flourish and maintain its ground, even unto the end of the world. *The gates of hell (all power inferior to that of Almighty God) shall not prevail against her. My sheep bear my voice: they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand: my Father which gave them me, is GREATER THAN ALL; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. That is, my Disciples shall be opposed, persecuted and afflicted; but no human power or policy shall prevail against MY RELIGION.*

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Not satisfied, however, with these gracious and explicit promises from Heaven, our Establishments in support of Christianity, have solicited and procured the precarious, impotent aid of Princes and Ministers of State: who sit on the thrones of majesty, solace themselves in the pavilions of honour, to-day; and to-morrow—are no more. An Egyptian Pyramid leaning against a bull-rush. The inference then undoubtedly is, that Almighty God is neither concerned nor engaged to protect and perpetuate them; and that they can never dare trust their Cause to his only representatives in this world, Reason and Common Sense; but are meanly and ignobly obliged to shelter themselves under their own Canons and Decrees, enforced by civil penalties and punishments. Mark also the absurdity and preposterousness of that situation they have hurried themselves into, in another respect. As REASON is their professed and mortal enemy, in every attitude they present themselves in, therefore do they decry Reason; interdict its use and exercise in matters of Religion. Shutting themselves up in subterranean dens and caves, they would fondly persuade us there is no such thing as a sun in the firmament, to illuminate our path and direct our steps. They are the very counterpart of the gawky ostrich, who thrusts her silly poking neck into a thicket, and then deems herself secure from discovery and attack.

How can one enter into a strong man's house, says our blessed Lord, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? But in the above case our mighty Establishments, from the meanest stimulation of cupidity and thievery, would steal into *the strong man's house*, when they suppose him asleep, or, like Sampson, deprived of that part of him in which his strength lies, and then spoil his goods, without daring to bind him.

How wretched and dishonourable is the Cause of the HIERARCHY! They would disqualify and disable that super-eminent Faculty, by whose generous and irresistible evidence Revelation stands or falls, in contradistinction to Paganism and Mahometanism; in order to justify and preserve themselves in the possession of their sinecures and employments!

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employments! There is something to the last degree pitiful, dastardly and ignominious in this procedure: altogether like one Prince attempting to cut off another in secret, by the poisoned goblet, or assassin's dagger, whose brave and gallant forces he is not willing or able to meet in the field! Revelation presupposed Reason as its test and proof existing in the world: otherwise it should have been no better than a symphony of exquisite sounds flourished in the ear of a man born perfectly DEAF; or an exhibition of exquisite colours presented to a man born perfectly BLIND. Reason is the corner-stone, the centre pillar of Revelation; remove this stone, this pillar, and the magnificent Edifice will instantly fall to the ground. *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me.* That is, compare my Person, Character and Appearance, with the prophetic references to them in the Old Testament, and judge of me accordingly. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.* That is, exercise your judgment and Reason, put a rational construction on my words and actions, and though ye may discredit what I announce and declare of myself, yet be convinced by what ye hear me say, and see me do. How candid and how gracious! How much the amiable reverse of all Hierarchies and Establishments! Our Saviour perfectly knew that every circumstance about him would bear the strictest and severest examination; therefore, he constituted and acknowledged every one about him his legal competent JUDGE: but THEY, thoroughly sensible that their pretensions and declarations, on which their importance and authority rest, would unavoidably give way to accurate trial and scrutiny, by express Canons and statutes have inhibited every one without exception from presuming to be THEIR judge, and fortified their inhibition, in case of delinquency, with actual mulcts and imprisonments. Who can compare the MASTER and the Servants together, without reddening with confusion, heightened with disdain, for the latter! And who would not run into the expanded arms of the former, the indearing affectionate FRIEND of mankind, who condescended to be examined and tried by the very persons he came to save and to enlighten; while with disgust, apathy and aversion, we turn
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our back upon the latter ! who instead of being the friends of Humanity, are Humanity's deadliest foes, and, as such, not less reluctant, less afraid to be examined and tried by their FELLOWS, than by their own Consciences. — Yet with insolence and presumption, with the dark-browed malignity of Inquisitors, do they step forward to try and scrutinize all mankind ; ascertain their belief, and adjudge their final doom ! A province our Saviour himself declined to act in, when upon Earth, to strike dead to the ground the pride and audacity of our Bishops and Church Rulers, if they have one nerve in their frame not indurated into adamant ! John, Gospel xii. 47. *If any man bear my words, and believe not, I JUDGE HIM NOT: for I am not come to judge the world, but to SAVE THE WORLD.*

Many generous and spirited members of the Hierarchy have painfully felt for their mitred, and other dignitary brethren in this shameful contrast. But what could they do ? they remonstrated in private, they publicly wrote against such legalized encroachments on the moral independence of mankind, and the thrice sacred privileges of Christians. Were they attended to ? Yes—as the adder attends to the voice of music ; the false-teared crocodile to the prey unable to escape from his fang : or more in point still, as the enraged Jews attended to St. Paul at the moment of their exclaiming, *Away with such a fellow off the Earth, for it is not fit that he should live.* We need not be surprised at the genius and temper of modern opposition to moral and religious Reformers. It is modern, but it is not *new*. Antient times advanced and pertinaciously defended the same pleas of partial utility and interested convenience, against every attempt to disturb immemorial occupants in their respective invirons of power ; to undervalue their property, or invalidate their tenure. Generally speaking, the longevity of their claim, and a recognition of their rights through a series of generations, extended the platform on which their dismounting and repelling batteries were erected.—But there is one standard rule of right Reason, which must necessarily be introduced here in all its energy. If an assumption be not at first just, virtuous and honourable, it can never become

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so afterwards ; for the distinction between these and their contraries is immutable, and never depending on accidents or contingencies : otherwise, Virtue in time might become vice, and vice virtue ; which indeed would gratify many, but eventually would ruin all truth and intelligence. To determine, therefore, the rectitude of a present claim, it is no way momentous to ascertain the numbers that have been successively the better of it ; each of whom handed it down to his representative with redoubled assurance of title ; but the single indispensable requisite is, to clear up the integrity of the original charter, or deed of impropriation ; by whom it was granted ; on what degree of desert ; what purposes of intrinsic good to effect, and last of all, in what manner precisely such purposes were to be effected.

The present disquisition only regards religious objects : Therefore, to the ostensible guardians of Religion it would more particularly address itself. With them it ought to be a most solemn consideration, how far they can equitably answer to their own minds, for exerting all their power and influence, which, from their connection with the State, are not inconsiderable, to suppress the voice of Truth, occasionally heard from the Press ; with a false colouring of expedience to disobey the call of liberal and ingenious writers upon them, that they should examine and prove themselves ; and convince the impartial world, by fair argument and conclusive reasoning, that they are indeed no hypocrites, no impostors, no deceivers, endowed and held in pay by the Realm ; but genuine ministers of Christ, and commissioned preachers of the Gospel. The reason for their performing this requisition is contained in these few plain but sufficiently alarming words. *Left haply they should be found fighting against God.—Whosoever offendeth one of these LITTLE ONES which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.* Little ones—a tender appellation often in the mouth of our Saviour, to characterize his own peculiar Disciples. Now, it is impossible the term can ever apply to Bishops, and high Church Dignitaries, who rather immediately rank under the title of
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GREAT ONES ; being at once objects of awe, envy and ambition. It would be throwing an air of perfect burlesque on the decorum and propriety of speech, to call *them* little ones, except we understand it in a sense highly farcastic, as alluding to our Saviour's judgment of John the Baptist. *Nevertheless, he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, is greater than he.*

To call a Bishop or an Archbishop, seated in his palace, amid his costly side-boards, lackeys, and attendants ; riding in his finely varnished coach to the Parliament House, to attend the police of a *far other* Kingdom than that of *Jesus Christ* ; arrayed in all his magnificent sweeping Pontificals, to perform some of the peculiar solemnities of his function ; or sitting, on other occasional calls of duty, full in the brilliant circle or select party at cards, with easy dignity and relaxed demeanour : I say, to call so august, so magnitudinous an object a **LITTLE ONE**, would recall to our idea Xerxes, the mighty Xerxes, whipping the waters of the Hellespont, to shew his authority ; a Roman emperor catching flies to gratify his avarice of conquest ; or a more modern potentate under his Confessor's weight of flagellation.—*Be it far from thee, my Lord, the littleness of affecting the little title of the LITTLE ONE, this shall not be unto thee.*—Many will be found, as many as there are Livings and Sinecures to gratify, to insinuate this famous rebuke of Peter's in the Right Reverend ear : but shew me the monitor possessing so much divine lustihood of spirit, as to step up to his Grace, or his Lordship, and boldly utter the contra-rebuke of the text. *Get thee behind me Satan ; thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of MEN.*—Such a monitor indeed, I might suppose Dr. PRIESTLY, who can extract the instant principles of vitality from chalk ; from the hardest and coldest bodies can elicit that fluid which pervades and vivifies the Universe.

What wonders hid in Nature dwell,
Let Priestly, Nature's High Priest, tell ;
Christ's Flamen too, instruct the nation,
What greater lie in Revelation :

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The lum'nous path of each is trod
 Up to one common centre—**GOD**.
 Shall he stop timid, in his way
 Because a flight of midges play?
 One spark electric, one small breath
 Mephitic, sweeps the whole to death.

It will not bear a doubt, that the *Little Ones* mentioned by our Saviour are, among others, our occasional remonstrants, from the Pews, against glaring established innovations in his divine Religion; against spiritual pride, spiritual ambition, and spiritual monopolies. The spirit of the Gospel is a spirit of perfectly equal common sodality among all its votaries. Whoever assumes one tittle of authority, one small item of pre-eminence above another, becomes that moment a Disciple of *the God of this world*, and renounces his primogeniture and privileges, as a Disciple of *Jesus Christ*; no longer, as his Lord and Master, confesses him before men, the assured consequence of which is, *not to be confessed by him before his Father and his holy angels*. This sodality is as plainly commanded as language and common sense can express it. *Call no man Master upon Earth: ONE is your Master, even Christ, and ALL YE are brethren*. If Divines can explain away an injunction so positive and explicit, they may also, by a similar license, explain away the decalogical injunction against murder, against adultery, against theft.

Divines, however, of the Hierarchy have explained it away; and none more systematically than a Right Reverend Prelate now living, in his **ALLIANCE** between Church and State: therefore the Clergy of the Hierarchy, to a man, do avow and patronize an attempt to set aside and weaken the authority of the divine Commands, as delivered from Mount Sinai, and recognized by our Saviour, on which all moral duty and religious obligation depend. With singular propriety, then, may the following scripture axiom be applied to them. *He that breaks one of the Commandments is guilty of all*. Nor is it the least aggravation of the offence, that they set the dangerous example to others of subtilizing and then evaporating the spirit of Revelation, refining on its language, and quibbling with
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its sense: a scandalous spiritual logomachy, a wilful deliberate perversion of the Understanding, which has subsisted, in spite of Genius, in spite of Science, in spite of Philosophy, in spite of the Word of God, ever since the renowned Council of Nice; that first solemn judicial Convention of *the powers of the darkness of this world*, of Antichrist, to overthrow the Gospel of Jesus. How literally adumbrated in these prophetic words of our blessed Lord! *There shall arise false Christs and false Propbets, and shall shew great signs and wonders.* Great signs and wonders indeed! The teachers of a Religion that fundamentally inculcates meekness and humility; a uniform preparation for another world, a constant contempt of this, and retirement from its temptations—a Religion originally calculated and revealed to mankind, as a counterpoise to the infirmities of our nature, the seductions of vice and the allurements of pleasure—a Religion whose intrinsic return and remunerations are *alone* promised, and can alone take place beyond the grave—but more superlatively still, a Religion, whose peculiar asserters and defenders were enjoined to put on the *whole armour of God*, to be prepared, not only *against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places*: I say, great signs and wonders indeed, that the very professed Teachers of a Religion, so singularly predicated, so divinely circumstanced, should be seen trooping to palaces, to Courts and Courtiers; offering their service, their influence, their suffrages—for what? to betray their Master a second time into the hands of men; stretch him in abject prostration at the footstool of a CONSTANTINE; not even with the sentiment of those admiring, but mistaken Jews, to make him a king; but to enlist him among the submissive ignominious slaves, the *servum et mutum pecus* of base-born, clay-allied Royalty.

Satan himself outdid them in the splendor of his conception, the courtliness of his address, and the magnificence of his offers. *Taking him up into an exceeding high mountain, and shewing him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*; he backs the magnitude of the
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temptation with this assurance. *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*—The terms offered by CONSTANTINE, to bring Jesus Christ under subjection to him, and greedily accepted of by the Clergy, basely counterfeiting his name ; are too diminutive, too insignificant, to bear a comparison with those of the *Prince of darkness*.—To enumerate them would, perhaps, be esteemed excessively invidious, as unavoidably throwing an appraisement of perfect wretchedness on certain armorial tiles, certain pecuniary appointments, by no means poorly thought of by modern Bishops.—Yet to be more honest than wary, less politic than bluntly plain, however singular and paradoxical I may be thought, and however I may indanger the breaking of the Bishop of Gloucester's best settee under his jactations of risibility at my expence ; I cannot help considering, on the same precise scale of analogy, his Alliance between Church and state, and Satan's memorable temptation of our Saviour. The Devil, we are assured, can sometimes transform himself into *an angel of light* : that a Bishop, when he pleases, can transform himself into *an angel of darkness*, we have had many instances. The Author of the *Alliance* stands not in the attitude of singularity. We have all the evidence the case admits of to consider the Bishops of Rome as lineal established Angels of this sort ; and why any other Bishop, suppose, if you please, an *Anglican* one, should not arrive at, if truly ambitious of the pre-eminence, to me, I must confess, there appears no reason, Bishops in consequence of investiture and consecration into their diocesan charge, *enjoy* so large a portion of the glories of one of the kingdoms of this world, which Satan held forth only in contemplation or perspective to Jesus Christ, that I am constrained to conclude, when he failed in success with the Master, that he instantly conceived the thought, being infinite in his resources, of attacking the SERVANTS. He differed only in his *modus*, not his *ratio* ; promising only *a part*, not the whole of the glories of this world. Satan knew how to abate in proportion to the dignity of the Character he envied, without loving or wishing to imitate.

Though I would by no means wish to believe *nothing*, with certain modern philosophers, who hang together by a metaphysic as swallows hang together under water, because they are torpid; or, if we suppose them alive, are continually playing a sort of alphabetical blind-man's-buff with each other; yet I have long been forced to adopt the determination, to be *astonished* at nothing. In the infancy of Society every thing wears the aspect of novelty, of wonder; as it advances to its state of maturation, they in proportion subside; till, at its acme, or somewhat down the labefactive declivity, they totally vanish. Were it not for a circumstance of this nature, could any one repress his astonishment (upon comparing Christ's Kingdom, as delineated by himself, with the Kingdoms of this world) to think that a professed subject of the former, and a public teacher in it, should propose, and actually treat of it as practicable, an *Alliance* between them. The Bishop's motto to his book should have been, *Credo, quia impossibile est*. We are repeatedly told by no mean authority, that God and Mammon, Christ and Belial, can never consort. Why are we told it so often? Surely, that we should everlastingly keep up the distinction in our ideas of this world and the next; *i. e.* that we should *give unto Cesar the things that be Cesar's, and unto God the things that be God's*.

To impress the momentous sentiment more forcibly, the expression is very often varied. *No man can serve two Masters. A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. The strong man must be bound, before his goods can be spoiled. New cloth must not be put upon old; nor new wine into old bottles.* What is the fair obvious amount of all these? Why, that contraries cannot subsist together, but must repel and destroy each other: and that Pride and Humility; Pleasure and Self-denial; Meekness and a haughty Spirit; subjection and authority; Truth and dissimulation; union and discord; affection and simplicity; are some among many of those self repellents and self-destroyers.—In natural science to suppose the centrifugal and centripetal powers acting one way; fire and water commuting each others identity; darkness and light

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light producing the same optical effect; I believe, would be all esteemed, and justly, high misdeeds of Hypothesis; but I am sure they cannot be more so than the heterogenous notion of an *Alliance* between the spiritual and temporal worlds: an Alliance incongruous in itself, and were it otherwise, impossible to be made. Jesus Christ is not now upon Earth: in forming such a systematic conjunction of interests, who would take it upon him to act as his locum-ténens or representative? He himself appointed no such Personage to succeed him; neither did he leave this office of representation in trust or commission with any class or denomination of men whatever: so that the person or persons that would clothe themselves in the august character of his ambassadors or plenipotentiaries, to go through with so great and solemn a transaction, should be neither more nor less than the identical ANTI-CHRIST. The plea of succession from Jesus Christ, through the Apostolic line, is a plea without proof; entitled to no farther credit or deference, than any other bold interested assumption of pride and vain glory. The only proof of such a lineal descent would be an *accompanying living Inspiration*; and the only proof of Inspiration, a *resident power of working Miracles*: but as neither of these is alleged to subsist, but both certainly terminated with the Apostles, the other cannot possibly subsist without them. As well might day light exist without the sun; heat without fire; vegetation without heat; and magnetism without the magnet.

We know, indeed, that Bishops at ordination take upon them officially or declaratively to impart *the Holy Ghost*. But what sort of Spirit is it they *bona fide* impart, with this awful name annexed to it? Such a Spirit as possesses themselves; the spirit of ambition; the spirit of avarice; the spirit of *lording it over the Heritage of God*; the spirit of secularity; the spirit of encroachment and lawless confederation. Such a spirit they have always ready at command, and such a spirit *only*. So that the Episcopal exclusionary prerogative of ordaining men into their Hierarchy, that is, of perpetuating themselves, is a demonstrable imposition on the easy nature and credulity of mankind; a setting aside of the Scriptures of truth,
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and a manifest retort of *the lie* upon our blessed Saviour, when he addresses himself to his heavenly Father, and declares, *I have FINISHED the work which thou gavest me to do.*

An *Alliance*, therefore, between Church and State, is a mere conceit, a theological blunder; the voluntary misdeed of a man who was *resolved* to live a Bishop, to die a Bishop; being ashamed of such a Master as *Jesus Christ*, who had nothing temporal to bestow upon him but—the contempt and hatred of the world. *If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, and I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hateth you. The Servant is not greater than his Lord: if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you*—From so humiliating a prospect, to a high mind and dignified brow, how happy, how exquisite a thought, was *the Alliance* with princes and the *magnati gentium*! It was like leaving a waste and dreary wilderness, where the sole gratification the eye had was forlornly to close itself in friendly blindness; and entering at once a perfect paradise, beauteous, variegated and delightful, where the only *want* of gratification consisted in the eye being overpowered with too much.

It is true, an unexpected conflict of the elements, a sudden hurricane, or storm of thunder, might soon have disfigured the landskip's charming appearance; rendered the security even of the distasteful wilderness a like desirable object: and beside, even in the ordinary course of things, without these dreadful casualties, life's setting sun would anon have thrown a universal blank over all. What then? while it lasted was it not a Paradise? and have we not this precept highly venerable, not *to think of to-morrow, but let to-morrow provide for itself?*

Let us view the celebrated *Alliance* in its principal attitude of expedience. Its friends and adulators allege, that hereby the Christian Religion has acquired a large accession of strength and stability: Kings being its nursing fathers, and Queens its nursing mothers. But is Christianity yet in its infantile state, its leading-strings, its nonage,
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that it must be nursed and dandled on the knee? Particularly, is it a poor disconsolate naked orphan, swathed in a roller and put in a basket, for the first royal eye to pity it, the first princely hand of charity to take it up? Supposing it an infant at first, surely, after having passed through the maturing process, or if you will, education-course, of three entire Centuries, without any imperial nurse or foster-father, nay, kings and emperors so many blood-thirsty Herods seeking *the young child's life*; you cannot suppose it to have gained so little masculine hardihood, as not to stand upon its own legs and to go where-soever it listeth.—To drop the figure.

Nothing can be a more fatal error, a more egregious mistake than the opinion, that the Gospel of Christ requires, and is the better of human countenance and support. An Institution, that directly and plainly condemns those favourite corruptions, false maxims, and interested policy, that are not only interwoven with Civil Government but are avowedly cherished by it, to require and solicit the support of that very Government! It is a solecism in terms, a self-contradiction—It would be, with respect to itself, the very worst sort of *Imperium in imperio*. It would be taking a viper, a scorpion into her bosom, to fasten on her tenderest nerve, so often as she deviated in her general jurisprudence or executive trust, from perfect virtue and rectitude. For Religion, though natively mild and gentle, yet, in cases where individuals or great bodies dare not appeal to her tribunal, *as thus characterized*, cases as numerous as our sins and our wickednesses; she cannot interpose between the delinquent and that sort of painful exquisite consciousness, which hath by no means too strong an emblem in the viper's bite, or the scorpion's lash.

Moreover, Civil Government, by bringing in the Church into an *Alliance* with herself, would absolutely come in contact with what should fatally affect her own appropriate interest; provided the Church continued to preserve her distinctive dignity, and original spirit: would lay an embargo on her own resolves; clog every wheel of legislation, and impede the executive energy of every measure.

measure. Am I understood here? the consequences, as here stated, strike my idea fully and clearly: I hope my language is sufficiently perspicuous to convey that idea to others. I know my language is strong. I intend it so; and think I would have discredited and abandoned my Cause, had it been otherwise. My Cause is infinitely important and interesting. The excellence and internal validity of the Gospel abide the discussion: that is, it remains to be proved, whether the Gospel of Christ be indeed a divine Institution, self-dependent, self-operative and universal; or merely a selfish local monopolization of benefits and advantages, meant to lean on mortal props, and only capable of passing through certain prescribed channels of narrow secular dimension.

If, then, Civil Government cannot possibly come under any articles of *Alliance* with the Church, that Church preserving its original standard of rectitude and purity, without suffering materially in her body politic, and feeling a principle of obstruction and repugnance running through all her system, a position which seems to evince itself; surely, when *such* an Alliance actually, *conceptis verbis*, has taken place, we are irresistibly led to conclude, that the State found the Church circumstanced and sentimented perfectly to her mind; *i. e.* that the Church, as now constituted, her high ally, is in a state of degradation from her exemplar or prototype; and that she has lost as much of internal holiness, as she has gained popularity and exterior condition. So true is that saying of our Lord. *The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.* The State having voluntarily, and even solicitously joined herself in alliance with the visible Church, is a standing *established* proof of the above.

Two consequences naturally result from this situation of the Church. First, She has hereby brought herself into a general state of defaulture; by which her communication with Jesus Christ is cut off, as well as her title to a variety of special promises made to the true Christian Church. Secondly, She has reduced herself to the pitiful necessity of standing or falling with that political body

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body to which she stands in the relation of an ally; and farther, which is the most disgraceful circumstance of all, she cannot step one foot forward in reforming herself, or propagating the Gospel, without the consent, approbation and concurrence of the State. In other words, she cannot make one single profelyte to herself, without making him a profelyte to the State also; so that *the English Church* can never possibly become the universal Church, till, at the same time, the English Government become the universal Government. But this last can never happen: the natural jealousies of States, independent and powerful as England is, or that European system called, *The Balance of Power*, stands invincibly in the way of it; and of course it follows, that the Established Church of England can, at no period whatever, be the Catholic Church. Lastly, on this head. The Christian Religion, we are assured, will one day be universal. *This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* Matt. xxiv. 14. If so, the universality of it must be effected by a set of ministers or preachers, totally different from those now constituted by Law periodically to rehearse and response its public service: therefore, the ministers and Preachers of the Church, allied to the State, are not demonstrably the Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel, or the Disciples of Jesus Christ; but the Servants of the Court, in Livery, in pay, and the ticketed members of a Corporation.

This is bold and blunt language; but it is the language of Truth, and the language of the New Testament. *My Servant shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any one bear his voice in the streets.* This is a summary descriptive character even of Jesus Christ himself, as well as of his Servants. How beautifully varied in the following words! *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* But the voice of our Established Clergy is one never-ceasing voice of striving, crying, and being heard in the streets. And what is the burden of the clamour? of their striving and crying. The egregious, the unparalleled merit of—*teaching for Doctrines the commandments of men; and making the Commandments of God of none effect by their traditions.*

traditions. The Commission to the Seventy, and to all future Christian Ministers whatever, runs thus. *Go ye, and preach the Gospel unto all nations.* 'The only tack or clause to it is this. *Freely ye have received, freely give.* But how is this glorious and important Commission executed by our Established Clergy? Instead of preaching it to all nations, they confine it to ONE; and make the Gospel of Christ a mere matter of rotatory form and artificial rehearsal; supposing, *they shall be heard for their long prayers and much speaking*, in imitation of the Heathens: and instead of *freely giving*, as *freely they have received*, they lock up the treasures and blessings of the Gospel in their strong boxes, their Articles and Creeds; gazing on them with the senseless avidity of misers; and like Misers, alike incapable of enjoying them themselves, and of imparting them to others.

The proofs of contrariety between the true Disciples of Christ and the members of the Hierarchy, who pretend to be his Disciples, are so multitudinous, and so strong, that it is no easy matter to prescribe limits to one's self, or to fix upon the strongest. But the most astonishing of all is, their swearing and subscribing their names to their own illegitimacy and incapacitation. If language and common sense are capable, under the direction of Candour and Integrity, of informing us what Truth is; or if the Gospel be indeed the hallowed repository of that divine, immaculate, immutable Truth; with the utmost tenderness and decorum for the Established Clergy, it cannot be denied, it cannot be palliated, that they patronize and animate a system of Christianity, directly and plainly the reverse of that left upon record by the Evangelists; of that propounded and exemplified by their Master, our Lord and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST: Not only so, but they came under solemn express obligations to one another, to the State, and in the deliberate hearing of men and angels, to persevere, maugre all difficulties, *ad diem usque supremam*, in patronizing and animating such a System.

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logomachy of a Corporation? How long shall we suffer ourselves to be over-ruled by an Authority, not so great, not so venerable, as that of every individual; the authority of every individual being the authority of all mankind? How long, meanly genuflected, shall we idolatrously worship the *WARBURTONIAN MODERN PAGOD, the Alliance between Church and State?* How long shall we be imposed on by the wretched trick of belief, that Revelation must be *re-revealed*, and that Inspiration must be *re-inspired*? In other words, instead of every Christian man being his own priest, and spiritual Gospel-interpreter, in this world; that a standing Priesthood, lineally divine, and possessing powers to perpetuate itself, is indispensibly necessary and must be dutifully submitted to? To vary the expression with still greater perspicuity. That before we can trust or believe *Jesus Christ*, we must trust and believe the Clergy. Before we can acknowledge and confess *the Son of God*, or *the Son of man*; we must acknowledge ten thousand sons of God and sons of men. Before we can take up our Cross, that is, his Example, and follow Christ; we must take up our Church permits, breviats, safe-conduits, tolerations, test-oaths, subscriptions, and follow the Clergy. Lastly, before we can read or understand the Canon of the New Testament, the Christian's Bible, which is as easily understood, as to know the straight from the crooked, the dark from the luminous path; we must read and understand their still *NEWER Testaments*—their Creeds, Articles and Liturgies; which, to be sure, are as easily understood as—the crookedest from the most crooked, the darkest from the most dark!—

Here, no doubt, numbers will be loud and forward to exclaim, *What means this babbling? Away with such a fellow from the Earth.* Would he lay his ax to the root of all Religion at once, by rooting up the Clergy? would he destroy even all public appearance of Christianity among us? would he have our Churches, the Sanctuaries of God, deserted and desolated? would he, as unprincipled and barbarian as the worst of them, reduce us to the condition of wandering Indians and Arabian banditti? —These interrogatories, from the authoritative mouth
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of a Bishop, pontifically habited, and jurisdictionally benched, would, it cannot be denied, awaken every *auditory nerve* of feeling within us. Yet, under the thunder of rebuke and haughty menace, might not an odious, an unpopular individual, like me, in self-consolation recollect, that two illustrious Apostles, St. PETER and St. PAUL, were! clamorously railed at, and tumultuously hurried before the Civil Magistrate, for a similar offence, as sowers of Sedition, and disturbers of the public peace? Nay, in a richer vein of consolation still, and with a degree of triumph allowable enough on such an occasion, might not one open his Bible, at St. Luke's Gospel xxiii. 2. and there dwell on the astonishing circumstance of JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF being arraigned and vehemently accused before Pilate, and afterwards before Herod, as having been guilty of treason against Cesar, and as a perverter of the People?—And why did the High Priests, the Scribes and Rulers advance and push forward this false, this iniquitous charge? Let Bishops and Church Governors feel abashed, feel debased to be told. Because their Superstitious Rites and Ceremonies; because their emoluments of office, their authority among the People, and their dignified opinion of themselves, were touched to the quick, touched with the nicety of a needle's point, by our Saviour and his Apostles.

Nor is it paradoxical, nor extravagant to conclude, that if Christ and his Apostles were this moment upon Earth, and in England, they could not avoid acting in the same line of conduct, and consequently of subjecting themselves to the same ignominious treatment.—It remains indeed a matter deeply recondite, a matter systematically reposing in Right Reverend bosoms, whether or not *Jesus Christ*, upon his inveighing in the keenest terms against their covetousness, their honours, their riches (as he certainly should do) would not be treated by our Bishops with somewhat more courtesy and decorum than he met with from the Jews. Modern manners, especially of the Episcopate, are much more polished and refined than those of the first Century. Otherwise, why should we look for a different treatment, where the offence would be in no way different? Our Bishops and

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Church Governors have as much to lose, in consequence of their Establishment being destroyed, as the Jewish Doctors and High Priests could possibly have had; and we know that, *as men*, both were and are perfectly the same. What should influence then an opposite judgment, or an opposite procedure?—Nay, the Jewish High Priests and Rulers had a plea in their favour, which the High Priests and Rulers of modern Establishments have not. The Priesthood and Hierarchy among the Jews, with the immunities and emoluments connected with them, were undoubtedly of divine original; positively instituted and minutely circumstantiated by Legislators and Prophets immediately from Heaven. But the Priesthood and Hierarchies of *latter times*, have no such plea; not the least shadow of one for *the last*; and for *the first*, proofs quite problematical and inconclusive. In truth, the negative of the one infers or includes the negative of the other. The universality of the Christian Dispensation destroys the very idea of an endowed established Priesthood. The native temperature, the *natale solum* of the last, can never be the Species at large, but particular spots under particular laws, regulated by a single head or temporal prince. The Priesthood otherwise established, or occupying a more extended sphere of jurisdiction, would become an independent spiritual sovereignty, like the Romish Church; which by forming herself on *this very model* of catholicism and supremacy, is now dwindled down to the half of what she was; and in time will be forced to relinquish every thing she has usurped, till nothing shall remain but her first state of common privileges.

To stop the violent torrent of exclamation and censure, let me here explain myself. Notwithstanding I am seriously of opinion, and think I have made it appear rationally probable, that no settled self-perpetuating Priesthood was ever meant to subsist in the Christian world; I still am ready to acknowledge, that the order of the Clergy, as Teachers and Examples, may be of real and important usefulness to Society, provided they take no more authority upon them, than other Masters of Seminaries, Lecturers and Professors in our Universities. That is, provided they address and treat us as intelligent creatures,

creatures, capable of Common Sense, and in no one instance go out of their depth themselves, by tampering with mysteries and metaphysics, or attempting to lead us out of ours. Whenever they do, they are no better than *blind men* undertaking to lead *the blind*; or rather, those fools and hypocrites mentioned by our Saviour, who wanted to take *the mote out of their brother's eye*, while *the beam lay across their own*. As at present constituted our spiritual judges and masters, the Clergy, from time immemorial, have been the source of infinite evil; evil subversive of human peace and happiness, the tranquillity of states and security of government; the momentous objects they were intended to watch over and to cherish.—History both sacred and profane attests this in the strongest manner. Our great national bodies of the Priesthood, hitherto have done, and still continue to do little else, than disabling and disqualifying one another from effecting what alone should have been considered as their supreme duty, *the universal propagation of the Gospel*. Instead of this, each Church has all along been endeavouring to destroy its neighbour's right of ordination and ministration; throwing insuperable obstacles and embarrassments in her way; exhibiting a perpetual intestine warfare; at once wasting their strength, and degrading their honour, instead of making head in conjunction against the vices and corruptions of mankind; and spreading thro' all nations the super-eminent discoveries, blessings and privileges of the Gospel.—The soldiers, in perfect peace and amity, only cast lots for our Saviour's garment; but the Clergy absolutely fall together by the ears, abuse and spitefully treat one another, about an object not so really valuable as the divine relic above mentioned.

When I peruse the Writers of the Scottish and Anglican Churches, with what intemperate heat, violence of spirit, and caustic virulence, they strive to degrade and sink one another; each denying the other's claim of genuineness and antiquity; I am instantly struck with the illegitimacy of both. The ultimatum of the great national dispute rests in this ignominious query. Which religious Establishment tells *the lie*? One of them assuredly does; but to pronounce positively, which is the dis-

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graceful delinquent, would indeed discover our dogmatism and interestedness, but not our liberality of spirit, or delicacy of sentiment. The truth is, the kernel of the nut being unsound and decayed, the two Churches at first came to blows, and are still occasionally dealing them around, in a scramble about the shell. It is true also, that each Church, not deeming it sufficient to pass her word, lest she should be discredited, takes a solemn judicial oath, that she speaks truth; calling on angels and men to witness the notorious deed.—Almighty God, *the searcher of hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men*, has two contradictory adjurations taken in his Presence, in which he himself is immediately concerned. Shall Almighty God trust the divine deposit of his most excellent Revelation to the care and faithfulness of persons, whose last decisive test of honour and desert is their mere personal asseveration? The full amount of such an asseveration is only this; *their trusting in themselves that they are righteous, and despising others*; the judgment pronounced of the vain-glorious egotizing Pharisee, whom our Saviour has left UNJUSTIFIED upon record.—To the independent religionist, the true Christian philosopher, what matter of moment is it which Church speaks the truth, and lies not? *Rixantur de lana caprina*. They themselves are only concerned, and must alone abide the consequences. *See thou to that*, thou swearing, thou trafficking Church! *what is that to us?* The genuine Disciple of Christ will always be a DISSENTER; hold himself at all times perfectly detached from all human standards, systems, and authorities, owning no spiritual Master whatever but Jesus Christ, *the Author and the finisher of our faith*: fully satisfied to abide by his own express injunction. *Call no one Master upon Earth, for ONE is your Master, even Christ*. And fully encouraged by his own divine assurance. *Whosoever shall confess me* (recognize, acknowledge me as his Lord and Master) *before men, him will I confess also* (acknowledge as my faithful Servant) *before my Father which is in Heaven*. The act of confession or recognition is graciously made reciprocal, and, with respect to us, singularly remunerative: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, in his superlative intentions
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of benignity to his Creatures, always making our duty and our interest inseparably to coincide.

The contention of our sister Establishments is exactly similar to that of the Disciples, before they were better instructed, viz. *which of them should be greatest*. And, indeed, at the very first ought to have been checked by our Saviour's reprimand, and express instructions to one and all of them. *The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them: but so shall it not be among you; but whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the Servant of all*. As these two Churches have perpetuated the illicit, the unworthy strife, they have likewise, in their own condemnation, rendered the rebuke and the censure perpetually applicable.

In short, to what do the infinite labour and lost time of our contending Establishments amount in the gross? to nothing more nor less than an avowed attempt to confine, within the Episcopal or Presbyterian dead walls of a public edifice, that Gospel which our Saviour assures us, *must be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations*; and which, as brightly depainted by himself, *is as the lightning which cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West*. But the spirit of our Hierarchies manifestly tends to rivet down the Gospel of Christ to a particular spot; by creating artificial disabilities and arbitrary disqualifications, to discourage mankind from embracing it, altogether unknown to the genius of that Gospel: consequently, their respective schemes resist, in fact, the spread of Christianity, and the fulfilment of the Scriptures.—How great a fatality is it, that men will not be convinced by Common Reason, in a point so clear, so plain! Intoxicated with the idea of their own importance, with the spiritual work of their own hands, like our midnight sons of inebriation, they deem themselves crowned and sceptred—crowned indeed with bull-rushes, and sceptred with twists of peacock-feathers.

How admirably has the great Prophet of ages predicted modern times and modern teachers! *If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, lo, there; believe it not: for there*

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there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders. Such striking representations of proof and evidence against the superstition, bigotry and despotism of *the latter times*, cannot come before the eye of the reader too often, cannot be varied too much in site and attitude. We are always happy and gratified to recognize original privileges and unalienable rights: though we do not ourselves doubt their validity, yet we never fail rejoicing at every liberal declaration of others not doubting it also. It is an honest gratification, and to the last degree generous: as Original Privileges and Original Rights, are those of MEN, not of a Party; of CHRISTIANS, not of Scribes, Pharisees and Hypocrites. Every decision in our law courts that brings Magna Charta re-established and re-illustrated before our eyes, gives us a satisfaction, a triumph, which those admiring eyes are better fitted to convey an idea of, than language to describe. Why it should be otherwise in matters greatly superior even to civil personal Liberty, would, to account for it in the detail, bring our Clergy into situations highly dedecorous, into lights extremely unfavourable to the integrity of their characters.

I have no doubt whatever but that the signs and wonders above mentioned have their exact counter-parts in our showy ostentatious Establishments, Creeds, Articles, Confessions; Acts of Convocation, Acts of Assembly; superstitious Rites and Ceremonies; human Doctrines, sculking under the venerable name of Mysteries; variety and parade of sacerdotal raiment: but above all, the Inquisitorial farce of Bishop's Courts, and Supreme Church Judicatures; where, with the mock solemnity of trial, the ridiculous trumpery of form, Clergymen presume to sit as judges, summon delinquents before their pitiful tribunal; presume, without a blush on their countenance, a palpitation at their hearts, to *degrade, fine, imprison, excommunicate.*—All these are *signs and wonders*, marvellous and unparalleled. Among these we might mention here, respecting England, the office of Vicars-General and Surrogate; and respecting Scotland, of Kirk-Treasurers and Kirk-Sessions; where Clergymen interfere in the dirtiest jobs, with the meanness of the

very meanest secularity; with the covetousness of a common town-clerk, relative to his official fees, grant Administrations, Probates to Last Wills, Marriage Licenses, &c. &c.

Our Saviour, the divine paraclete of wisdom, in his prediction of *false Christs* and *false Prophets*, goes on thus. *If they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the DESERT* (the retired field-preachings of our Methodists, Seceders and Moravians) *GO NOT FORTH: behold, he is in the SECRET CHAMBERS* (local spots of worship, Cathedrals, Churches, Chapels, Meeting-houses, Conventicles, Tabernacles) *BELIEVE IT NOT*. Then follows this conspicuous and highly-illuminated text. *For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be. The coming of the Son of man*—the progress and diffusion of his Gospel.—In order likewise to put all men on their guard against local monopolies, and mercenary monopolizers of Religion, and to render us inexcusable in being deceived; our dear and amiable Lord gives us this affectionate premonition. *Behold, I have told you before*.—How consonant also to this idea of his Kingdom, but incongruous with that of our noisy bustling Establishments, are these distinctive characteristics of the Gospel! *The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation*. That is, with the powers of this world at its back; with the *fama clamorosa*, the orthodox hue and cry; the trumpeting forth of bigots and enthusiasts. No! so far, so very far from this, *Behold*, continues the same divine preacher, *the Kingdom of God is WITHIN YOU*. By the fairest and most obvious laws of construction, the meaning here must be, that Christianity, the inward worship of the heart and affections, was henceforward for ever to take place of Judaism, and the Temple-worship, in which, certainly, all future religious Establishments were included.

Our Saviour's memorable reply to the woman of Samaria, puts this in the fullest light of illustration. *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*. His reason for it is to the last degree pointed and satisfactory,

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satisfactory, and, I think, cannot be mistaken, if considered with any attention. *The hour cometh and now is, when the true Worshippers shall worship the Father in SPIRIT and in TRUTH; for the Father seeketh SUCH to worship him.* He puts it yet in a stronger and more convincing light. *God IS A SPIRIT, and THEY that worship him MUST worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Local, ceremonial, exhibitory worship, and the spirituality or intellectuality of the Living God, are here opposed to each other, or put into counter circumstances of estimation; and the inference or praxis left to the determination of the Understanding. But the Understanding, in Religious matters, since the beginning of the world, never has had fair play. Under controul by political Authority, and in vile durance to Priestcraft, in all ages and in all nations, it has never been suffered to exhibit any other than the appearance of a *candle put under a bushel or under a bed*, instead of being *placed on a candlestick or on a hill*, to shew light all around. Our Saviour indeed came on purpose into the world to alter universally this disgraceful situation of things, to deliver mankind from the tyranny of an ignorant superstitious Priesthood; from the vain and false worship of Scribes and Pharisees, and Hypocrites; against whom he inveighs with an indignant spirit and generous acrimony, quite worthy of his great Commission. He came, and for this super-eminent god-like purpose *only* came, to restore universal PEACE, LIGHT, and LOVE; the most glorious, the most excellent, the most exquisite TRIAD of blessings, in the power even of Almighty God himself to bestow: and if there is a TRINITY in Nature intitled to supreme genuflexion, before whose eternally consecrated shrine, Angels, Arch-angels, Seraphim, Cherubim, and Men, the last of the illustrious intellectual Hierarchy, ought to fall down in prostrate adoration, THIS it should seem to be!

Let us attend to the Messenger from the skies, who in his own bosom, from the bosom of the Father (to be the unutterable inmates of every Christian's bosom, that knows how to prize them, or how to communicate them) brought them down to our world, and presented them

to us with his own right hand. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you.* The very first salutation of the Gospel was *Peace*; a multitude of the heavenly host attending on the Angel that announced it, praising God, and saying, *glory to God in the highest, and, on Earth, Peace, Good-will unto ALL MEN.* So that Christ's public Ministry began and ended with the delightful, the endearing monosyllable. Here then we have the first divine characteristic of the true and only *Trinity*.

The next is *LIGHT*. *I am come a Light unto the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness. While ye have the Light, believe in the Light, that ye may be the children of Light.* Before our Saviour was born, Zacharias, the Father of John the Baptist, being filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesying, has this remarkable allusion to him, whose harbinger he was, keeping up the glorious prototypal idea of *Light*. *Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us: to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.* Afterwards, in return, how splendid a character in a few words, does our blessed Lord give of his fore-runner John; the Master not backward to imitate the Servant in the acknowledgment of excellence! *He was a burning and a shining Light.* Out of many, we shall only introduce a few passages more, which still preserve the same immaculate sentiment of Christianity—*Light*. *The Light of the body is the eye: if your eye be single (if ye be not an hypocrite) your whole body shall be full of Light; but if your eye be evil (no better than that of a vile Pharisee) your whole body shall be full of darkness. If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the Light of this world: but if a man walk in the night he stumbleth; because there is no Light in him. God is Light, and in him is no darkness at all: Christ is the Light of the world, and the enlightener of every one that cometh into the world. The path of the just is like the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Let your Light so shine before men that others seeing*
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We have got here into the galaxy of the Gospel, along the lucific cerulean of which Angels themselves might accompany us, not without surprize at the additional glitter of their robes!—I must confess myself so rapturously fond of Light, and so altogether an enthusiastic admirer of *Jesus Christ*, as the Messenger of *Light*, the Dispenser of *Light*, and the congenial sympathetic *Lover of Light*; that I never think I can illuminate my page too much or too often, with the pure, the holy radiation, the climateric unclouded medium of Heaven itself.—But who would not retire, even from *Light*, to LOVE?—The last, not least of our *Christian Triad*.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another. If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you: these things I command you, that ye love one another. Love here is the governing universal principle. I have confined myself to a few of our Lord's sententious and undistinguishing declarations of Love; so unaffectedly, but altogether so pathetically tender, that I am persuaded, no unprejudiced honest reader can peruse them, without feeling his well attempered heart burning within him.

Were I to adduce similar passages from the writings of the Apostles, who uniformly adopt this their Master's leading sentiment of Religion, and express it in the strongest terms of language, I might fill a volume, a beloved volume, with such passages alone. But the task is unnecessary

unnecessary. Enough has been already said to make it quite obvious, that *these three godlike monosyllables, Peace, Light, and Love*, are the significant emphatic whole of Christianity, its magnitudinous three-starred constellation. Who, even for a moment, can mistake or blunder about the meaning or sensation excited by any one of them? Whoever can, or says he may, has only one small extravagance more in reserve, to put the everlasting seal of marvellousness on his character—to doubt or mistake his own consciousness. Perhaps some one strange extra-natural mortal in a Century, may thus recede centrifugally from himself; but would you have a divinely-appointed Priesthood perpetuated to reason with such a man, or attempt to convince him? surely not: and respecting the rest of mankind not thus unaccountably accentric, there can be no more use for such an order perpetuated, than for a special order of Philosophers to teach us, how and when to look upon the sun, or in what manner to be directed by his rays. Can any thing be more ridiculously, more shamefully absurd, than to suppose, if Jesus Christ himself has failed to render his ideas intelligible to us, failed in perspicuity with regard to what he meant should be understood by the words *Peace, Light, and Love*; that any class or body of men whatever can succeed in the happy explication? This, indeed, would be making the Master inferior to his meanest servant with a witness; making him to whom the Father imparted his holy Spirit *without measure*, subordinate in inspiration even to those very persons that never had any.—The event, the present melancholy state of Christianity, stands in lieu of ten thousand arguments against the interested, the preposterous idea of an established Priesthood. What a mingle-mangle garbled mass have the theological schools made of the Gospel, under the triple idea of *Peace, Light, and Love*? The finest and the purest blood of the vintage, matured and mellowed by time; sparkling vivacious in the goblet of gold, and resting exhilarant on every nerve of fine sensation—how have they loaded it with the impurest dregs! and thrown it into the foulest fermentation!—*The Peace* of God and of Jesus Christ they have turned into perfect discord and wrangling: *the light* of God and of Jesus Christ, into mystery and darkness: and *the Love* of

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of God and of Jesus Christ, into hatred and malediction! —Who can deny these ignominious facts, that has been any time resident in a particular spot of the Christian world; no matter whether at Rome, or in the islands of Great Britain? who can deny these ignominious facts that has attentively consulted the faithful page of History, or has had the misfortune of dipping deep in polemical writing! the dark abyss of Controversy!

Had a policed Order of Priests been intended by Almighty God or his Son Jesus Christ, in the Christian Church, matters should not have been circumstanced as they manifestly are at this precise moment: that is, a new sort of Theocracy should have been grafted on the old; whereby an occasional communication with Heaven, by Prophets and other ecclesiastical internuncios, should have been opened, to prevent corruption, error and mistake, ever inseparable from the Priesthood. Now, as no such Theocracy has been constituted, and no mention whatever in the New Testament of any such, it follows of course, indisputably, that no standing lineal order of Priests ever was intended or ever thought necessary to subsist.

What better are our modern High Priests, Scribes, Pharisees and Hypocrites, I mean, our Bishops, Doctors and learned School-men, what better are they than, antiently, the High Priests, Scribes, Pharisees and Hypocrites, among the Jews? Our's I allow, have a polish, a courtliness, an address, a taste for Science, polite Erudition, and elegant Life, unknown to the stiff-necked pedantic Hebrews. What then? These are not essential to Christianity: nay, they put the purity of the Christian Character in eminent peril, by adding a poignance, a relish, a refinement to Pleasure and Gratification, which would seem to make the lure doubly captivating, doubly bewitching. So that Religion, in the hands of the Hierarchy at this day, is more critically and dangerously circumstanced than ever it was in the hands of the Jewish High Priests and Scribes. Yet, in consequence of the adulteration, the irreparable damage it sustained, under the hypocritical superstitious management

ment of the *latter*, the Temple and the whole enormous system of the Jewish worship were destroyed and abrogated. For what? that Religion in her renovated state of excellence, by *Jesus Christ*, might be placed in situations of greater hazard? more ordeally trying? The question answers itself, and gives the lie direct to all modern systems and Establishments.

What are our superb Cathedrals and highly ornamented Churches, with all their parade of attendants and exhibitory service; what are they, connected with the idea of worshipping God *as a Spirit, in spirit and in truth*, better than that Temple, once the pride of Jerusalem and the wonder of all nations? What are the officiating dignitaries of our Cathedrals and Churches more than those that officiated, upwards of eighteen hundred years ago, in the Jewish Temple? *i. e.* what are they more than mere men carried down the tide of life with all the crowded sails and spreading colours of Ambition, Pleasure and Vain-glory? Do they deny themselves one indulgence, not just without the line of common decency? do they decline one offer of preferment, riches or honours? nay, do they not anxiously and incessantly hunt after them with a systematic perseverance almost unexampled among even the gross of the People?—What, such an order divinely instituted? meant to be perennialized?—Either the Clergy are lawless, mercenary usurpers of the throne and Priesthood of Christ; or Christ, by commission from his Father, has deceived the world, has mocked the Common Sense and Feeling of mankind—But this can never be, till the Gospel, recorded by his four faithful independent Historians, shall be proved altogether spurious, a gross imposition, a pious forgery: therefore, the Priesthood, as now invested with honours and endowed with riches, stands on no divine basis, but rather totters on the sandy foundation of civil policy and a Corporation charter.—In further proof of this let Jesus Christ himself speak.

Ye shall know the Truth (addressing the Jews that believed on him) *and the Truth shall make you free.* Free from what? from spiritual bondage; from the sin of

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hypocrisy and superstition, connected with a tyrannical, vain-glorious, nominal Temple-worship; whereby *his Father's House was turned to a place of merchandize*. He adds, *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free* INDEED. This freedom, strengthened by a double confirmation, cannot refer to the sins and lapses of Humanity, for none of his Disciples were ever promised an immunity of this kind? No: it means a freedom from spiritual tax-masters, from a rigid ritual observance of duty; and it is a Freedom to last coeval with the world. This is endearingly illustrated by the following gracious invitation. *Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.* A relaxation of moral duty cannot be here meant, but wholly a relaxation, or rather total disannulment of all Priestly authority and discipline. This is farther confirmed by these words. *Call no one Father, no one Master: for one is your Father which is in Heaven; and one your Master, even Christ.* The command is indefinite and universal; which destroys the very idea of Religious Establishments, and Church Judicatures, that present us with a series of Masters, one above another, arranged by the State.

In pursuance of this general and perpetual alteration in the manner of worshipping God, our Saviour, speaking particularly of Prayer, the very essence of the Christian Religion, has left us these remarkable instructions. *When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that THEY MAY BE SEEN OF MEN: but THOU, when thou prayest, enter into thy CLOSET, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is IN SECRET: and thy Father which SEETH in secret, shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not VAIN REPETITIONS as the HEATHEN do; for they think that they shall be heard for their MUCH SPEAKING: be not YE therefore like unto them.—* Whoever considers the English Church Service, and the very pointed terms—*vain Repetitions*, and *much Speaking*—cannot avoid applying the stigma where it ought. How nerveless, tiresome and nauseating are her Morning
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ing and Evening Prayers! To suppose that Almighty God can be pleased or gratified with these *vain repetitions*, is to suppose Him pleased and gratified with the tinkling of cymbals, the toll of a bell, the dashings of a waterfall, or the rhyme—rhyme—rhyme of a parrot—There is a somewhat, a unity, a simplicity, an instantaneity, in conception and sentiment, respecting Almighty God, which is totally lost in the Liturgic unmeaningness of toutology and circumlocution.—Conception and sentiment are the lightning of Heaven, rapid, ubique-radiant, penetrating and sudden: words, the clouds and grosser atmosphere, which, indeed, serve to convey the flash electric, but without it, or after its accension, hang upon us, cold, damp, heavy and enervating.

Did the Master require supplementary evidence from his Servants, against an incorporated jurisdictionary Priesthood, we might produce innumerable passages to this purpose from the writings of the Apostles: but we shall restrict ourselves, at present, to two, St. PETER and St. PAUL. The Epistles of the former are general, addressed to all Christians throughout the world. In contradistinction to Temples *made with hands*, where we are assured in Scripture, GOD DWELLETH NOT; the Apostle Peter gives us a special definition of a far other Temple. YE (all Christians, says he) *as living stones are built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE, an HOLY PRIESTHOOD, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.* I Peter, ii. 5. Also at the 9th verse, we have the same memorable description of the true and only Christian Priesthood, not the Aronic or Levitical, not, let me add, the Pontific, Episcopal or Presbyterian; these being always virtually the same, though differing in designation; but a Priesthood, after the Order of Melchisedec, unchangeable, and untransferable. YE (all Christians) *are a chosen Generation, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, an Holy Nation, a peculiar People.*—All this, surely, requires no comment: it strikes at once and irresistibly. Nor am I at all surprized that the Hierarchic Clergy, almost to a man, whatever were their *bosom* sentiments, have all along publicly affected—not to be struck with the genuine meaning of the above plain passages; which

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who so readeth MAY understand. Jesus Christ himself accounts for their conduct in the most direct poignant terms, which, methinks, they never can sedately and soberly read, without an effort, at least, to kindle up a blush on their cheek. *Verily, verily* (the term of affirmation is repeated) *I say unto you* (the People that crowded to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus) *YE seek me not, because ye saw the Miracles* (on my own personal account, from duty and affection toward me) *but because YE ATE OF THE LOAVES AND WERE FILLED.* John vi. 26. There is more true meaning, more pathos in these eight simple words, than in ten thousand volumes of ostentatious affected zeal for Christianity, or rather self-defensive learning, written by the Clergy. Another passage of Scripture sets the systematic taciturnity of our Teachers, their obstinate confederated resolves, not to read the New Testament, by the sacred and always undeceiving light of the Understanding. The passage has been already placed before the reader, but cannot be placed too often. *Among the chief Rulers many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not CONFESS him, lest they should be PUT OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUE: for they loved the praise of MEN more than the praise of God.* John xii. 41, 43.

How strong is the language of St. Paul! *Know ye not that ye are the TEMPLE of God? The Temple of God is holy, which Temple YE ARE.* All Christians. But in his Epistle to the Hebrews, viiith and ixth Chapters, the total abolition of the Priesthood in the Christian Dispensation is clearly evinced. I shall present the reader with a few select quotations. If the meaning of them can be explained away by the chicane and sophistry of system, by the overbearing *ipse dixit* of Church Canons and Precedents, I see nothing to hinder any or every other portion of the Sacred Text being likewise explained away; till we arrive at the impassible dilemma of universal Scepticism, or, which is to the full as bad, till we all consent to repose, in torpid insensibility and eternal slumbers, on the papaverous bosom of ESTABLISHMENT. — *Of the things which we have spoken* (says St. Paul) *this is the sum: we have such an High Priest, who is set on the*
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band of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens: a Minister of the Sanctuary and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not MAN. If that first Covenant (religious Dispensations among the Jews) had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the SECOND (the Christian Dispensation.) THIS is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel, after those days (against the appearance of Christ) I will put my Laws into their mouth and WRITE THEM IN THEIR HEARTS: they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for ALL SHALL KNOW ME FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST.—This indeed is the literal purport of our Saviour's own declarations and commands. Who so readeth let him understand. If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear. What ye have heard in Parables (in the darkness of Allegory) that speak ye in the light; and what ye have heard in the ear (whispered in the ear) that preach ye on the house tops: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and nothing hid that shall not be made known. To which may be added, as a key to the whole, the following home question and reply, immediately applicable to the Priesthood of all Establishments. Why do ye not UNDERSTAND my speech? Our Lord answers his own question, and how pertinently! Even because YE CANNOT BEAR MY WORD. John viii. 43.—But to end this paragraph, as we began it, with St. Paul. He goes on thus, distinguishing in the aptest manner, the Christian from the Jewish Dispensation, the spiritual from the worldly Tabernacle. The first Covenant had Ordinances of Divine Service, and a Worldly Sanctuary: the Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the HOLIEST OF ALL was not yet made manifest. But CHRIST being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, NOT MADE WITH HANDS; by his own blood he entered in ONCE into the Holy Place; having obtained eternal Redemption for us. Redemption from what? from Ritual Ordinances, a worldly Sanctuary, a Tabernacle MADE WITH HANDS.—However, lest it should be inferred from what he laboured, and successfully laboured to prove, that no sort of Christian Fellowship or Assembling together, was profitable or necessary, as, he assures

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us, *the manner of some was*, he leaves this well-timed exhortation upon record to all Christians; at once evincing himself a true Disciple of Jesus Christ, and no intemperate espouser of Innovation in the extreme. Let us (in the absence of the old Constitution of things) *consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to GOOD WORKS: not forsaking the Assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER. Love and good works*—the result of the Gospel: *exhorting one another*—the duty of individuals—the duty of all. The purpose suggested is, with the openness, candor, the unaffected sodality of Friends and Brethren, to commune together, interchange one another's stock of knowledge and experience, unfold the true principles of conduct, the affections of the Heart; mutually infuse and invigorate pious resolutions, and confirm habits of meekness, forbearance, charity, patience, purity and holiness: a never-exhausted source of important business to employ all their hours, both of private meditation and associated intercourse.—The term *exhorting one another* destroys the very idea, not only of an Established Priesthood, but of all Ceremonial Service and systematic Forms.

We must recur here to the Wisdom of God, the never-failing Oeconomy of Heaven, on such occasions. In all matters of high religious moment and universal concern, we are not left to the bias of our own prejudices, the unsettled dominion of our own fancy and caprice. No: God immediately interposes, delivers such positive commands, and lays down to express and explicit a plan, that if we mistake or go astray, it must be voluntary and against knowledge on our part: that is, the effect of indulged corruptions, and not owing to want of perspicuity and obviousness in the great line of our duty. We have but two Revelations to mankind directly from Heaven: the Jewish Theocracy and the Temple-worship, one of them, and the universal Christian Dispensation, the other. Respecting the first, with what singular care and minute exactness is every thing laid before the People! The Decalogue or divine Code of moral Law, regarding private conduct and domestic discipline, stands the first distinguished figure; then follows the ceremonial and
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sacritical Service of the Temple, with all its sumptuary complicated apparatus. All is positive, specific, circumstantial and perspicuous, from the office of the High Priest to the purificative peace-offering of the meanest of the People. Nothing could possibly be mistaken, because nothing was left vague and indefinite. The errors that happened, were all errors of the will and the affections, not of judgment; for the Judgment was so perfectly informed in all things, even to the last minutiae of duty, that it could not err.—The chief and most fatal error that led the whole body of the Jews astray, and which encreased more and more, as their Constitution drew nigh to its period of dissolution, was their laying too great a stress on particular expiatory Sacrifices, extending them the length of plenary atonements for their aggregate of sins, which were only meant as partial and temporary; as taking off their disabilities and disqualifications for the year or present festival, and no longer. This mistake, however, proceeded from their corruptions and wilful habitudes of breaking the moral Law; and at the same time, from their pride of figuring at all the great solemnities of the Temple. In short, the whole of the Jewish Religious Constitution, was only symbolic, typical and preparatory, looking expressly forward to a more glorious and more excellent System.

At the head of this latter System stands JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God anointed from the womb, the representative of the Almighty; as the *Shekinah*, the *Holy of Holies*, and the Ark of the Covenant, had represented his invisible Majesty in the former. In this System, also, *Jesus Christ* is the only Lawgiver and High Priest, in place of Moses and of Aaron. St. Paul's words are express to this purpose. *There is truly a disannulling of the Commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof: for the Law made nothing perfect. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.* His proof is clear and explicit. In the Jewish Hierarchy there were MANY Priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death: but this MAN (*Jesus Christ*) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood.

hood †.—The meaning of the whole is obvious. The public Established Worship of the Jews, connected with a particular consecrated Edifice or Sanctuary, was entirely abolished by the coming of Jesus Christ, and a universal, spiritual and sentimental Religion detached in its very nature from all fixt, local, external Church Service, substituted in its place; such Service, considered as perpetual, according to St. Paul, and indeed according to Common Sense, being *weak, unprofitable and imperfect*. So that in the Christian Institution, there is but one High Priest, one Mediator, or expiation-offerer, between God and Man, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS: the orders of Priesthood however are as numerous as there are Christians in the world, or Believers in his name; all Christians whatsoever being, as Peter by a fine metaphor expresses it, *Living Stones built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE, an HOLY PRIESTHOOD, to offer up SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*.—Jesus Christ himself, Peter's Master, had long before him declared the same divine verity, in his own peculiar manner beautiful and sententious. *Believe me*, said he to the woman of Samaria (and shall we not believe him?) *the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: but the hour cometh, and NOW is, when the TRUE worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth; for the Father SEEKETH such to worship him*. And how unanswerably conclusive is the reason! *God is a SPIRIT, and THEY that worship him, MUST worship him in spirit and in truth*.—Let it be added to this, that our blessed Lord took occasion to inform the Jews, that *the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but that the Kingdom of God was WITHIN THEM*; in another place, he has these words. *And behold, ALL THINGS are CLEAN unto you*. Luke xi. 41. Intimating, as plainly as language could communicate the idea, that all distinctions of People and Public Places of Worship, all Ritual Forms and Extrinsic Service, were for ever done away: finely illustrated by himself in the following manner. *There is nothing from without a man that entering into him, can defile him: but the things which*

† Heb. vii. *Passim*.

which come out of him, those are they that defile the man
 How short and pithy a condemnation of Creeds, Articles and Confessions! All these, containing Doctrines merely speculative, that only subsist by the mechanism of sounds, the ambiguity of technical terms, and the artfulness of a solemn Logomachy; are things quite external to the man, that have no manner of concern with his Heart and his Affections; and what concerns not these obviously and instantaneously, is and can be no object of Religion; nor indeed in any respect better than that sort of puerile affected metaphysic, too fashionable, which was (alas!) capable of leading even such a man as BERKELEY into the wildest and most extravagant conceits.—And let me here flatteringly express my belief (my hope at my very heart) that the time *now* is, when the Empire of WORDS and SOUNDS, which I cannot but look on as the Empire of darkness, shall meet its fate—its dissolution; and the Empire of truth, moral Consciousness and Common Sense, be established on its sure rock of adamant, its more than Colossean pedestal of immutability.

After these positive and plain proofs against a standing self-perennializing Hierarchy, it would seem to add little to the strength of our argument to observe, that there are no rules, no directions whatever left on sacred record, to regulate this peculiar body of men, in its unavoidably complicated resolves and movements. If so, then is this *great body* left in the condition of a ship far out at sea, without compass, without rudder, liable to become an easy capture to the first bold enterprizer; unable to stem the heady current, front the mountainous wave; navigate the dangerous shallows, or bear away from the reef of rocks. What though her sails be full set? her streamers richly coloured, and waving gaily a-top? What though her stern finely painted, gilt and decorated? her decks crowded with hands, and her cabbins with skilful mariners? All these may serve to attract the gaping multitude, hying to the beach or clift (not without the sentiment of plunder) when she lies a dismasted, disjointed wreck: but they can never supply the place of her steady steerage or faithful needle; never without these, conduct her safely to the bay where she may anchor, or the haven where
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she may unmoor.—Jesus Christ was too divinely the Son of God, too rationally the Son of Man, to leave the external regulation of his Church, if external regulation it needed, to chance or fortuitous occurrence ; to the judgment, but oftener the phantastic imagination of Teachers and Guardians incomparably inferior to himself, in every essential of management and ministration : therefore, as no outlines of conduct are, in this matter, distinctly marked out, in this particular no schedule of precise instructions left behind him ; we have a right to conclude, nay we must conclude, that, with regard to worshipping the Almighty Father, all times, places, and circumstances, are alike ; all orders of men officiating, preaching or teaching his Gospel, all vestments, attitudes, postures, provided they be retired and humble enough, perfectly alike, and equally acceptable : and that the only requisite, which can never be dispensed with, is, to worship the Father *in spirit and in truth*, seeing the Father only seeketh such to worship him. *When thou prayest* (when ye worship God, for Prayer, always including praise, is the whole of Divine Worship) *enter into thy closet, and pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly : but use not vain repetitions, as the Heathens do ; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking : be not ye therefore like unto them.*

I know it will be very consequentially asked here, by persons who are no less tenacious of spiritual dominion than their forefathers were presumptuously forward to usurp it, what, have we not frequent intimation in the Apostolic Writings, of the Church ? the Church at Corinth ? the Church at Ephesus ? the Church at Rome ? of Deacons ? Elders ? Presbyters ? Bishops ? True : we have. But what is there denominated the Church, was no more than a private society of Christian converts, a select company of faithful men ; only subsisting and held together by their brotherly love one to another ; without power, authority, distinction : and those persons among them called Deacons, Elders, Presbyters, and Bishops, only occasional temporary overseers, in the infancy of the Gospel ; not divinely instituted, but barely nominated by the Apostles, both for the more expeditious furtherance of

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the Gospel, and their own personal disingagement, as they could not be in all places at once, nor usefully confined to any one particular spot. Above all let it be especially attended to, that at so early an æra, in the infantile state of Christianity, THERE WAS NO NEW TESTAMENT EXTANT, to unfold the great principles of the Gospel, to be the unerring rule of life and manners, by exhibiting that historical detail we now have, of the Birth, Person, Character, Life, Moral Instructions, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of JESUS CHRIST. What then was incumbent to be done? just what we find the Apostles actually did. They first passed through different Cities and States themselves, preaching and spreading the Gospel, universal repentance for the remission of sins; the very things John the Baptist and Christ himself had preached before; and then, at their departure, recommended certain persons, whom they had particularly instructed, to be resident behind them, as men of exemplary gravity and weight, of the best information and experience, to feed the yet tender youngling flock of Christ; that is, renew, invigorate, and strengthen those divine precepts and instructions orally delivered to them by the Apostles. In truth, the Apostles themselves had no authority beyond this: they were repeatedly forbid, by their great and most excellent Master, to exercise any rule, any dominion over others: and surely if they had no right granted them to exercise it themselves, they could not possibly delegate such a right to any other persons whatsoever.

Our Lord on all occasions discovered a tender and watchful regard for the human Species; which seemed evidently to increase in proportion as the objects of it receded from established system, and artificial society. His disposition was benign, gentle and affectionate to the last degree. Nothing disqualified any one so much in approaching him, as pride, selfishness and hypocrisy. These are the natural growth of system and exclusionary combination. With Publicans and Sinners, Samaritans and Strangers, he often associated, often pitied and excused them: but he never could endure the company of the proud, the selfish and hypocritical, except to censure and severely reprimand them. All his beautiful and striking Parables or Allegories, uniformly inculcate one or

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or other of these three heavenly temperaments of the Soul, *Mercy, Forgiveness, and Forbearance*. The Scribes, Pharisees, Lawyers, and Priests, were the only class of people, that ever roused his generous indignation, or gave asperity to his language. And why? because they lived and subsisted by a tax of dissimulation, holy fraud, artful encroachment, and specious tyranny, on the abused multitude. Nay, it is signally intitled to remark, as one of the strong outlines of his wonderful character, at the same time that his horrid Betrayer, and Accusers, the High Priest and Rulers of the Synagogue, were left uninterceded for to their doom, he actually put up a petition to Heaven, which could never return unanswered, for the very soldiers that were superintending his crucifixion. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* They were merely the executive instruments under the controul of power, and not guilty of that greatest and blackest crime in nature, misleading and controuling others: therefore, though even in the act of venting their scoffs and reproaches against him, it would appear, he did not deem them unworthy of his forgiveness and god-like clemency.—From the whole it seems unquestionable then, that the highest demerit and criminality in the pure and holy eye of our divine Saviour, was one set of men domineering and lording it over another; overreaching their honest credulity, and practising upon their easy unsuspicious tempers. *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to strike his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that Servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites.*

From his utter detestation of this temper, and to prevent it as much as possible in his own Disciples, and consequently in the Christian Church to the end of time; he takes many opportunities of giving them the idea, respecting one another, of perfect equality and brethernhood: that on no occasion, on no pretence whatsoever, any one or more of them should assume or exercise authority or lordship over the rest: *but whosoever of them would be the*

chiefest, should be the Servant of all. And how astonishingly he fortifies this his fundamental Precept, and discovers the intenseness of his desire to have it observed, any one may judge, who has read the Evangelist John's circumstantial account of our amiable Lord's *rising from supper, laying aside his garments, taking a towel and girding himself*; and then—let Heaven and Earth, angels and men, admire and venerate the unparalleled condescension—*after he had poured water into a bason, beginning to wash the Disciple's feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*—This wonderful act of shining example performed; having taken his garments and set down again, and commencing his exhortatory instructions; who would not catch every accent of his blessed mouth, and treasure it up in the dearest and happiest recess of memory?—None other but that divine Person who came from the bosom of the Father could have spoken as we find him speaking in these words. *Ye call me Master, and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am: if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an Example, that you should do as I have done to you: the Servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them.*—If the reader has hitherto been a stranger to an instance so superlative of self-abasement and humility, I would refer him for the whole passage to John's Gospel, xiii. 4. *et infra.*—Alas! we lose the sublimest, as well as the most endearing part of our Religion, instead of reading the New Testament ourselves, by suffering others to read it for us! Articles and Confessions give us only the skeleton, the dried preserve of Inspiration; while Inspiration itself is thrown by on our shelves, to slumber with spiders and with moths! With the amiable, that is, the essential part of Scripture, these Compositions have nothing to do: therefore would our Teachers discourage us from looking into the Word of God, in its pure and native dress.

After what has been laid before the reader, but not exaggerated, to imagine Jesus Christ intended a permanent Hierarchy in his Church, or a lengthened subor-

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dination of members, would indeed argue very strong powers of imagination : it would be nothing less than exhibiting an extravagant sort of proof to mankind, how effectually, but ingeniously, he could set aside his own precepts, and force his disciples into circumstances of life—to counter-operate his own living Example : telling them, “ I leave you these instructions behind me, as the most valuable legacy in my gift ; I make you severally masters of that secret, by which you will arrive at the perfect resemblance of me your Master ; but, at the same time, you must be put into situations that, unavoidably, will render them all useless and abortive.” The whole together would be throwing an air of ridicule and contradiction on a part of that fine model of prayer which he himself has left us, viz. “ lead us or suffer us not to be led into temptation :” it would be forcing his servants to do what he enjoined them to pray to their heavenly Father might not be done. But the most uniform consistence is one part of our Saviour’s finished character : beside that *he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man ; for he knew what was in man.* Moreover, such a constitution of his Church was wholly unnecessary : it could possibly receive no sort of firmness or fixture, in its fundamental principles, from human confederation, or union of interests and influence. Nothing short of immediate divine interposition, nothing any way short of Miracles could be equal to the mighty magnificent work of diffusing and establishing a new Religious System, addressed to the species, and comprehensive of all mankind : especially as, in its very complexion and temper, it ran obviously counter to all the most inveterate prejudices, habits, passions and corruptions of the world ; and in particular, with the most hostile declarations, tended to overthrow a religious Institution that had subsisted for more than twelve Centuries, founded and patronized by Almighty God, and adhered to by a proud and bigotted People with the most rigid and pertinacious enthusiasm. In so arduous and seemingly impracticable a work, nothing but Omnipotence could interfere or be successful. Human Power, indeed exerted all its nerves, put forth every strenuous effort, to overlay Christianity in its nonage, and obstruct it in its propagation ; but Human
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Power, in all its mightiness of resource, could never have pushed it forward one inch, or afforded it one smallest pebble for a corner-stone to rest upon.

In perfect consistence with this, how pointed and circumscribed are our Saviour's directions to his Apostles, when he commissioned them to go and preach the Gospel. *When they bring you unto the Synagogues, and unto Magistrates and Powers, take you no thought, how, or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour, what ye OUGHT to say.* In another place it is said. *For it is not YE that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.* Luke hath varied, and rendered still more perspicuous the command. *Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before, what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your Adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist: in your patience possess ye your souls.* Luke xxi. *Passim.* Every thing here is to be done by Almighty God himself; nothing whatever is left for the Disciples to do, but merely utter and declare what the Holy Spirit at the instant should suggest to their minds: otherwise to be only PASSIVE and PATIENT. All this literally coincides with this declaration of our gracious Master. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*—*Sheep and Doves*—how admirably characteristic of the benign, placid, gentle, inoffensive Religion of Jesus, and of its genuine Teachers! How opposite to Combination, Compact, Alliance! to Bodies artificially intrenched and circumvallated, behind the mechanical munition of redoubts and breastworks, setting all approach and attack at defiance!—Doves never assemble together to resist the rapacious hawk, or overpowering eagle: nor does the flock, the timid flock lanigerous ever throw itself into embattled phalanx to oppose the fierce, the blood-feasted wolf.—Where resistance, defiance, a hostile front and a hostile spirit, vibrate on the ear from every quarter of the Hierarchy, arrest the eye in astonishment, and would throw the heart into submissiveness and intimidation; the tender, the kindly-familiar idea of the *lamb*, of the *dove*, never occurs

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occurs to our mind : the piercingly-taloned bird of prey, the wide-mouthed forest savage, living by plunder, and only satiated with blood, strikes suddenly upon us rather, with the shoot and shock of consternation ! these words of divine pre-admonition, unavailingly tinglingly in our ears. **BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, THAT COME TO YOU IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING : BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENING WOLVES.**

What then is the nature of that Commission delivered to the Apostles, and extant in undiminished force to this day, respecting all Christians whatever that have magnanimity and independent Spirit enough to accept of it ? Neither more nor less than this, the very simplest and, most obvious in the world. *Go and preach the Gospel to EVERY CREATURE ; that men should repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.* John the Baptist preached *this* ; Jesus Christ himself preached *this* ; and the Apostles were commanded to preach *this*, and nothing else. The Commission indeed was enlarged at first by extraordinary power of *healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and casting out Devils.* This however was a power restricted to the personal Ministry of Christ and his Apostles. It is highly worthy of observation, that when John sent to Jesus to be informed, *art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ;* John gets this very same account sent him. *Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see,* says our Lord. *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*—To perform the first, as already observed, required nothing less than the immediate omnipotent power of God : and to perform the latter, nothing was or ever will be necessary, but sincerity, hearty good will, and perseverance : independent of all associated influence, incorporated sanction, and stipulated gratuity. Did it require coercion and authority to say, *Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand ?* Is not the same important call to *repent* as wofully necessary now, as in the first Century ? or is any tack to Repentance requisite now, that was not requisite then ? Human Nature is the same in all ages,
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and so is the identity of Sin. If our Sins are not blacker than they were in the Apostolic age, they are certainly more numerous and more fatally diversified: hence the summons of repentance should be louder and more frequent. But, alas! the cry of our post-apostolic times is not to Repent, but to CONFORM! not to forsake your sins, but to forsake your HERESIES! not to confess Jesus Christ, but to confess the Scottish or the Anglican POPE, the Convocation or the General Assembly! not to depend on *that mouth and wisdom which no adversary shall be able to gainsay or resist*; but to depend on the—winds and waves—the leer of a brocaded COURTIER, or the smile of a lawn-sleeved BISHOP!

Had the first Preachers of the Gospel, even had the Apostles themselves, to the word REPENT, added, respectively, or I will *imprison* you, I will *fine* you, I will *degrade* you, I will *excommunicate* you: what think you, my good Right Reverend Lord Bishop, what think you, may it please your Archiepiscopal Grace, should have been the consequence? Why, they might have been what you are *now*, great, titled, opulent: but the Gospel of Christ never should have passed the river Jordan; never have stretched itself beyond the Pool of Bethesda.—With such a tack to such a call, justly should the bearers of it have been considered as the most bare-faced impostors, mere lack-linen desperadoes, or Bedlamites just sprung from their fetters.—To be sure those names of wretchedness can never be bestowed on a mitred Prelate or stalled Dignitary; men so academically lettered, so hierarchically elevated, consummately systematic and perfectly court-bred: but, abating the names, have we not a right to affirm that they act a part incorporately, patronize a scheme legislatively, scarce different from that extravagance we only threw into the form of a mere supposition? certainly we have. I think myself altogether authorized to affirm it, from the following fact ascertained by one of the Articles of the Church of England, which cannot be controverted, without tearing up her very existence from the foundation. This is the flaming, this the egregious Article which, I will make bold to say, lays claim to more than Christ or his Apostles

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ever laid claim to.—Article XXth of the Anglican Establishment. The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and AUTHORITY in Controversies of Faith, *i. e.* Authority OVER Jesus Christ and the inspired Writers of the New Testament.—It is true, reddening all over with a sudden paroxysm of shame, and recoiling serpent-struck from the magnitudinous impiety of her claim, she affects to qualify that Authority by certain proviso's of not contradicting the Word of God, or rendering one place of Scripture repugnant to another. But respecting this solemn matter, is not the Decree the JUDGE, and the Judge the DECREER?—Shameful perversion of language, honesty and common sense!—equal, every whit equal to any of the Infallible Impudences of the Roman Pontiff!—Nay, behold farther the consummate integrity of the wisest and purest (as multitudes of her Doctors affectedly style her) Church upon Earth. This same Article was an absolute forgery at first: Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer knew nothing of it; they would have started back from so enormous an Authority. It was forged by a Spirit congenial with that which forged the Pope's Charter of Infallibility and Supremacy; otherwise, to the honour of our first Reformers, it never would have stood among the Anglican Articles of Religion. The detection was not fully made out till the time of LAUD; and, unhappily for that Prelate, has left an abiding stain of prevarication and falsehood on his Character*. This high Claim then, to render it sacred and stationary in the Church, must first of all be forged: afterwards it must stand in company with a Clause of pretended moderation, justice and decency (which indeed properly construed, would invalidate the whole) to render it swallowable by those that—*strain at a gnat and swallow a CAMEL*.—So that her very basis and characteristics, as a CHRISTIAN REFORMED Church, rest upon a disingenuous mean forgery; a piece of deception that has too great a degree of notorioufness to deceive any one but the—Deceiver, *qui decipi vult*. For once our Saviour's memorable saying fails to hold forth its example in the persons of our *false Teachers, false Christs, and false Prophets*.

* See a sensible spirited Pamphlet called, *Priestcraft in Perfection*.

Prophets. The Children of this world are in their generation wiser than the Children of light.

Now, let us shortly state the extent of the Authority above-mentioned. The Church hath Authority in Controversies of Faith. The first object that presents itself here, is the Being of a God. His bare existence is never doubted; it is a postulatium of all and every Religion. But the Being of a God comprehends his relation to us in a particular manner; how we are to conceive of him as our Creator, our Father, our Sovereign, our Providential Preserver, our Saviour, and our Final Judge. When I mention God as our Saviour, I would only be understood to mean, his being the Author of that Salvation perfected by his Son Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ himself understands him in the Gospel. *God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.* To conceive aright of God in all the above relations and capacities, is the whole of the Christian Religion. Shall I not conceive of Him then, till I do it in the precise manner the Church specifies and directs? then is he not MY GOD, but the Church is an IDOL I have deliberately chosen in his place: so that I must inevitably be either an IDOLATER, or a non-conformist to the English Church. There is no room whatever for evasion here: the alternative is unavoidable.—Moreover, if I, or any other individual, in the name of the North-British Church, established by Law, and nationally convened, should roundly tell the Church of England, that I consider myself not less qualified and authorized to judge for her, in religious matters than she is to judge for me: what answer could she make, or any of her learned Bishops for her? It may be guessed what answer she *would* make, viz. that the Church of Scotland's assumed Right could in no degree come into competition with her's. But if this answer should not satisfy (I believe, it would not) but the plea of equal Right be still strenuously insisted on, against the primority of the South-British Establishment; what must be the issue in the long run? Why, after infinite shuffling and eternal trifling, the retort of eligitimacy, of Antichristianism direct, should

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should be deliberately exchanged: so that we must inevitably either believe Christianity itself a solemn cheat and lie; or believe both these national competitors, dealing so rotundly and undauntedly in asseveration, *cheats* and—out of respect to the majesty of the Realm, that protects, but cannot legitimate them both, I leave the blank unfilled up.—As in the first instance, so in this, there is no room whatever for evasion: the alternative is unavoidable.—Farther, if she has *really* that Authority in Controversies of Faith she contends for, she also must have it in her power to prove it incontestibly. Now there is only one infallible way of proving it, the very way precisely by which our Saviour proved *his* Authority in matters of Faith or Doctrine—by MIRACLES. Has the Hierarchy these at command? if not she imposes on us, but more grievously on herself, as one of the false Christs, the false Prophets; and ought to be addressed as were certain *vagabond Jews, exorcists*, heretofore. *Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye.*—Our Saviour expressly appealed to his Miracles for his Authority: if the Church cannot make this appeal, then has she *no* authority. *If I do not the works of my Father, says the divine Appellant, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works.* But how can we believe that Church, whose apparent works are the works of *the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life?*—They can never therefore make a profelyte from knowledge or conviction, as our Lord and his Apostles always did. If ever she make one, it must be by the FORCE of temptation. Repent, that is, *Conform*; or you shall never be intitled to any of my sinecures or preferments. This force is even more fatal and criminal, than that of menacing and dragooning into Religion; a summary method once known to the English Church.

The propriety and righteousness of this Claim is still farther manifest if we consider, that all Authority must be enforced by a resident effectual resource in itself; otherwise it is no Authority beyond a nominal privilege or a feather. But whence has she this resource? or how shall she exert it? If she cannot realize and command it at all times, then is it a mere matter of vain pretension,
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a proof rather of her impotence, to the full gratification of ridicule, than of the contrary. If she *can* however, then does she make Christians as the State makes seamen, at a critical call of necessity, *by impressing them into the service*: not chearful and generous volunteers, but brow-fallen dispirited mercenaries. Let it be likewise added here, that her Establishment, and the Religion of the Gospel, adopt two extremes of procedure directly opposite to each other. The Christian Religion is a blessed and happy state of security from the fatal biasses and dangerous allurements of this life, so far always as we chuse to interest it in our favour: but the Establishment of it launches us all at once into the midst of them, places its unthinking and unguarded members in Society's most conspicuous and consequently most destructive situations, too powerful for Humanity, ever too powerful for the Clergy to resist. Instead therefore of the Church being the fortunate means of suffering us not to be led into Temptation; she directly, without one single tremor or blush, offers us her guiding hand, and conducts us into all its most shining and bewitching paths. Does she make amends for this or bring matters to an auspicious equipoise by her preaching against Temptation? Not far from it. She only hereby evinces her ambodexteral address, by first presenting baskets of the finest flowers, and most delicious fruits, too charming, to exquisite to be refused; and then holding forth, half-concealed, only the **PICTURE** of a snake, which in its *living form*, is wont to hospitate in deceitful ambush beneath these very flowers, these very fruits.—With the enfeebling monotony of cold and listless speech, that tingles without dwelling on our ears, she *desires* us not to be led astray by Ambition, but she **MAKES** us ambitious—by vanity, by Pleasure, by Covetousness, by Luxury, by Envy, by Affectation, by Hypocrisy, by Selfishness—but she **MAKES** us their obsequious slaves and facile votaries.

How peculiarly, but fatally circumstanced in her constitution is that Church, who, if she act up to the spirit of her claims and her pretensions, would to all intents and purposes, set aside the efficacy of Christ's meritorious sufferings and death, and annihilate the Christian Dispensation:

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sation : and if she does not act up to it, proves herself nothing more, nothing better in her operative capacity, with all her magnificence of assumption, her celsitude of boast, than any other community or denomination of Christians whatever, these not excepted, she is wont sneeringly and affectedly to style *Sectaries* and *Schismatics*, that is, all Dissenters and Non-conformists!—With her usual smoothness of insinuation, her lubricity of address, she informs mankind, that she over-rules no one, she compels no one, either as the *outs* or *ins* of her Establishment—the declaration how specious, but how false ! She does not indeed, it is confessed, by the *per vim manuum* of her beadles, sextons, bell-men and door-keepers, take men by the shoulders, and thrust them, *invita Menerva*, into her cathedrals and Chapels. But what does she do in her exuberance of holy zeal ? men have too much the genius of repulsion naturally, too much rude forest-bred lustihood, to be *driven* like a flock of lie-goats or wethers : she therefore adopts Satan's method with our blessed Saviour—she tempts men with the glories and rarities of this world : and, alas ! (with tears of infinite regret be it spoken) she tempts no one but whom she overcomes ; as pressing in the ardour of her temptations as Satan heretofore, but far more successful than he : Satan left our Saviour for a season, says the sacred historian Luke, being commanded *not to tempt the Lord his God, but to worship him, and him only to serve* : but at what season, at what period, do the temptations of the endowed established Church end ? They can never end, till she cease to be *endowed* and *established* : that is, till she gives over doing *what she ought not to have done* ; and seriously and in good earnest resolves to do *what she ought always to have done* ; throwing herself entirely on the providential care and protection of that GREAT BEING, who feeds the ravens of the forest and clothes the lilies of the field, *that neither sow nor spin* ; and has assured us, *He is kind even to the UNTHANKFUL and to the EVIL*.—Yet who ever relinquished a Bishopric, a Stall, or a Benefice, in order to leave the Church ? or, in order to purchase any of these, who ever hesitated a moment to acknowledge all her lawless and exorbitant claims ?—She therefore, notwithstanding all her counter-protests

protests and declarations, her sanctimonious glosses and Lyolian pretexts, she far more powerfully rivets and enthral's that part of the human species within her reach, than by fetters of brass and ligatures of cable. The brazen fetter has often been unloosed by the dexterity of art; the cable wears itself through by its own friction: but what art, what dexterity, what length of boundless fruition, can divide in twain the magic, the magnetic fastenings of Pleasure, Riches and Honours?—Alas! alas! how shall the leopard change his spots? the Ethiopian his skin?—It avails not that the Clergy are told by men infinitely their sapient betters (a lasting disgrace to the Teachers of Christianity) by HEATHEN PHILOSOPHERS, that these three, *Pleasure, Riches and Honours*, are the deadliest, because the most insinuating foes of pure Virtue, integrity of spirit, and excellence of character: that the ambition of them, the indulgence of them, never fails to degrade the original dignity of our Nature; to contaminate the fountains of Truth; to render us less nobly and habitually in love with Ourselves; less the favoured objects of our God's supreme love; and less admiringly to be commemorated by a wise and venerable Posterity: that they destroy our happy imitable usefulness among mankind; debase moral feeling; vitiate sentiment; bias the rectitude of judgment, and supersede two of the first graces of consummate worth, *Self-denial* and *Humility*: but beyond all these, that they ever manifestly tend to glew our spirits, our hopes, wishes, and expectations to this world, in its whole and best amount, unworthy of a wise and thinking man's attachment; and that they divert aside the current of our affections and desires from another and better world; stifle those aspirations after Immortality, which are as natural to every man, not corrupted in his heart, nor wounded in his Conscience, as to the pole the inclination of the needle, the gravitation of all things to the centre.—What then? such divine men as SOCRATES and PLATO may, with little less than Inspiration on their lips, philosophise to eternity, yet be as little attended to, by our Priests and Levites, as, in their Pulpits, our Priests and Levites are attended to by the People.—Instead of these excellent Personages PREACHING against the pleasures, honours and riches of this world; I might have

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have brought JESUS CHRIST himself on the stage, who had he met a *Socrates*, or *Plato*, would have told him, as he told the Jewish Ruler, *thou art not far from the Kingdom of Heaven*: but really, not to disguise the matter, I wish not to cast pearls before swine—to lay scripture-evidence before a set of men who, as a Body leagued, or in Alliance with the Powers of this world, stand in bold oppugnance to the spirit of Christianity, the genius of the Gospel: if to the venerable consecrated *whole* they stand opposed, it cannot be imagined that *any* part will have weight or credit sufficient to convince, to rouse, to kindle them.—Nay, *if they mind not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they believe though one should arise from the dead.*

To men in the present possession of what secures them respect and purchases them deference, it were idle to suppose, that any remonstrance, though penned by an angel of light, imbued with pathos celestial, should have any other permanent effect, than making them clasp their titles and appointments with yet a fonder gremial in dearment—This I allow, this I would deplore while I allow: but is not this the singular unhappiness, not to say dishonour of their case? Truth utters one voice, and their *established* Interest another: that of the latter is the voice of the charmer, the Siren's voice; that of the former never charms, though Immortality in her hand, and all Paradise in her bosom, till the other is suppressed. Truth and Virtue, Wisdom and Self-denial, always go hand in hand: you can no more separate them, than the sun and light; beauty and proportion; gold and its specific weight; the diamond and its sparkle. Whoever says he possesses *Truth* without *Virtue*, *Wisdom* without *Self-denial*; may say, and be as worthy of belief, that he possesses the faculty of flying without wings, living without respiration, and of respiring without lungs. *Virtue* and *Self-denial* are in the place of miracles to attest and authenticate *Truth*: indeed, in this world of depravity, licentiousness and vicious indulgence, a uniform, steady *Virtue* and *Self-denial* are next to Miracles. Their proximity is evinced by another circumstance. *Virtue* and *Self-denial* can never be established as permanent

nent habits without that silent, but perceptible intercourse and communication with Heaven, opened by Prayer, and kept open by that secret internal exercise of an enlightened understanding, and well-conditioned mind—Contemplation. Miracles are the result of power derived from Heaven; Virtue and Self-denial, when optative and unvariable through life, are the result of the same power: these then, not illegitimately, may be termed SPIRITUAL MIRACLES. Hereby also the true meaning of such Scripture-passages as the following, may be ascertained. *NOTHING is impossible to him that believes. If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this Sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.*—Christianity was, and only could be established by Miracles, which, for distinction-sake, may be called of the *first class*, viz. giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, raising the dead, &c. and Christianity to the end of the world can only be truly manifested and illustrated by Miracles of the *second class*—Virtue and Self-denial, begun on Principle, and sanctified by experience. *Shew me thy faith without thy works*, says the excellent Apostle James, *and I will shew you MY faith BY my works.*

Let us examine this matter still more closely. In the absence of the above-mentioned Miracles, I mean of the *second class*, what proof can we have, at this late æra, to determine our judgments with regard to the nature and peculiar requisitions of Christianity? Christianity surely is an object of uncommon importance, and demands from all men the most serious and attentive investigation. How then shall we conceive of it in the absence of infallible, and next to infallible evidence? doubtless, from the *ipse dixit*, the *sic volo* of one man, the Pope, or a national convention of men, such as the Houses of Convocation in England, or the General Assembly of Scotland. But these three not being unanimous, but very materially dissentient from each other, it first remains to be settled which of this great triecclesiastical Body (if we may make a new term) merits the preference of credibility. Waving however all comperitory punctilio at once, we shall fix on the Anglican Church as our

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standard, or the centre of all ecclesiastical authority. Whence then does the Anglican Reformed Church derive this authority? Time was when she had none; time surely will be, when she shall have none. In the *New Testament* she is no where named, nor any Church constituted and endowed as she. Perhaps, since the N. T. was written, she has had a particular Revelation from Heaven, a charter-right of privileges, to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and settle Controversies of Faith. Why not? Mahomet had his; and wherefore should she not have her's?—Surely she would not chuse to deduce her authority from General Councils, or contemplate it as derivative from the State.—It behoves her then, without artifice or evasion, to return direct and satisfactory answers to these queries. If she cannot or will not answer them, she must answer for the consequences at a far other bar than a polemic or literary one. She has relinquished the only certain criterion of her legitimacy, since the expiration of supernatural powers and gifts, *Virtue* and *Self-denial*, and has left herself totally without a witness: So that she must suborn witnesses, to invalidate the charge against her, or she must plead guilty. By pleading guilty, she may retrieve a portion of her lost character: on the contrary, by every artificial disingenuous plea she impresses into her desperate Cause, she will convince an impartial discerning world, that she poorly covets the *security* of Innocence, without the possession and merit; and that she envies NONCONFORMITY, only on account of her irresistible manner of gaining conviction and winning the affections of men, without once attending to the irresistible cause—*Truth, Honesty and Common Sense*.

What, it will be instantly replied, is the Church of England divested of Truth, Honesty and Common Sense? Broken into parts I readily grant she is not: many of her members are men of distinguished virtue; but in her collective capacity, her convocational spirit, I have hardiness enough to affirm, that she has always been systematically divested of Truth, Honesty and Common Sense. The reader is not desired to swallow down bold random assertions in the lump. He shall have, as he has an un-

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doubted right to demand simple obvious proofs.—The reverse should be exactly the practice of the Church; who in her decretorial wisdom takes upon her, roundly and hardily, to assert *this, that*, and the *other* thing, without condescending with common civility to offer any degree or species of proof.

First then, Truth and Liberty (I do not mean licentious, but Gospel Liberty) are so intimately connected, that they must always be considered as synonymous. Thus says our blessed Lord himself, *Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.* Words addressed to those that believed on him. *Free*—not, as already remarked, from the foibles, weaknesses, imperfections of Humanity: no—but from the servitude of an enslaving, hypocritical, superstitious, corrupt PRIESTHOOD. From such a servitude how glorious, how divinely circumstanced the emancipation! or in Scripture-language, *The Liberty of the Children of God!*—This sense is put beyond a doubt by the verse that follows, John x. 35. *The Servant abideth not in the House for ever, but the SON abideth ever.* That is, the Jewish Dispensation of Rites and Ceremonies, of typical Doctrines, and external Service, was meant as local and temporary: but *that* Dispensation sent and now offered by ME, of necessity must eternally abide, because it is universal Freedom from all spiritual slavery whatever, and because it is founded only on Principles which render God himself and Heaven eternal—PEACE, LIGHT, and LOVE. With singular aptitude and pathos his *own* general summons or invitation comes in here. *Take my yoke upon you; for my yoke is EASY, and my burden is LIGHT:* as well as this inestimable assurance. *If the SON shall make you free, YE shall be free indeed.*—It would be insulting the reader's knowledge to inform him, that the Church interdicts us of this Freedom; steps in between God, between Jesus Christ and us, by decreeing Rites and Ceremonies, and deciding jurisdictionally all Controversies of Faith; which she has no more right to do, than the Jews heretofore to perpetuate their system of Rites, Ceremonies and Controversies of Faith; or to style Jesus Christ, a PERVERTER
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of the People *, and a USURPER of Cæsar's throne † ; because his avowed intention was utterly and for ever to abolish these VERY Rites, Ceremonies and Controversies of Faith. The stupified, ferocious Jews, abandoning the Saviour of mankind to ignominy and crucifixion, notwithstanding *Pontius Pilate's* strenuous and reiterated efforts to save him, exclaimed (how pitifully fallen from their Theocratic majesty of Spirit) *We have NO KING BUT CÆSAR!* the Clergy of England, by the mouth of Rites, Ceremonies, and Authority in Controversies of Faith, virtually utter the same. WE HAVE *no King but* —GEORGE. *George Rex* authenticates and legalizes ALL the Church's Rites, Ceremonies and Controversies of faith ; without whose current stamp they should be no more than —hieroglyphics written on Sibyl's leaves, hither and thither blown—as the wind blows ; no more than—gold or silver coin smuggled through the kingdom, without George's effigies and arms, or, when weighed in the balance, found wanting in its sterling weight ; the consequence of which all the world knows, is to be remanded to the mint, to be fused, stampd, and issued anew. —In the best and greatest sense, so far as the protection of their bodies and property extends, *George*, without doubt, is their King ; because their bodies are visible and tangible—alas! corruptible too : but with respect to their SOULS, their MINDS, he cannot be their King, for this reason, a rustic's reason, because the *Soul*, the *Mind*, never can be seen, never can be handled ; and because the *Soul*, the *Mind*, is IMMORTAL : now for Mortal to controul Immortal, or to throw the circumscription of an Act of Parliament over it, would be a solecism of the first magnitude, a simple impracticability, like man becoming God ; or such a prodigy as Jesus Christ should be, leaving Heaven, the bosom of his Father, bending at the foot of earthly royalty, and swearing allegiance to a—WORM !—I repeat it, a worm—MAN, even crowned and sceptred man, a very worm ! whose *breath is in his nostrils : whose glory is as the flower of grass : the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away!* Who to-day is in splendor and in majesty, and to-morrow lays aside his diadem, his purple ermin robe, and is no more

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* Luke xxiii. 14.

† John xix. 12.

for ever!—In like manner the caterpillar deposits her exuviae.—As the Head of a perfect system of political Liberty, perfect, perhaps, as can be found upon Earth, I love the Monarch, and the Man: I owe him my best respect, duty and obedience: but my duty, my obedience to GOD, and to JESUS CHRIST, his filial Representative, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, is even paramount to these; nay, are the only certain foundation of these, so long as Loyalty and Principle go together: so that the Prince who would step in, as my spiritual Sovereign, between God and my Spirit, *removes away the prop from his own throne, totters when he ascends it, and breaks asunder my bonds of fealty and allegiance to himself.*

Methinks we have sufficiently proved one part of this our allegation—that the Church of England, as a circummured, distinctive, decretorial body, has not, and cannot have Truth on her side. The next thing we alledged she wanted, is Honesty—Honesty indeed can never be where Truth is not: yet it requires to be somewhat specified, as it particularly applies to individuals, the refracted members of the Hierarch; whereas Truth refers to its aggregate Doctrines. With regard to the identity of Truth, let it be observed, before we introduce Honesty on the stage, that we have only two archetypal Languages in use (if duplicity will be allowed us here) the Language of WORDS, and the Language of ACTIONS. Perhaps the reader never heard of the latter language before; nor, to say the truth, have I: yet to me it appears that the distinction of the term will be of importance; will lay open a new vista to the Mind, whereby many great objects may be surveyed and examined, in juster proportions, and bolder attitudes, than hitherto they have been. Language, vernacularly understood, is only a certain vehicle or mode of conveyance; by which one man, without entering into another man's bosom, may and can be informed of what passes there: this, no doubt, renders it surpassingly valuable, and only, when spoken with the guilelessness of a Nathaniel, and the undeceivableness of Nathaniel's PANEGYRIST, inferior to Omniscience itself, which looks into the Soul,
without

without any medium of access. But Language, though efficient in so much, has a weak side, a tender vulnerable part. It requires not the lyncean or the aquiline eye to find it out. Language is the property of Falsehood, as well as Truth; of the Foe to mankind, as well as the Friend; of Vice, as well as Virtue; of the Knave, as well as the honest Man; of Superstition and Bigotry, as well as true Religion and the Gospel.—Alas! that it should be so! alas! that it is so! Alas! that false Christs and false Prophets, as well as the true Christ and the true Prophet, should be at liberty to range through its divine treasures; transplanting its noblest imagery, its finest flowers; and transfusing all its delicious fluency! Satan, and the angel Gabriel, traversing the garden of God at the same time!—Yet still have we a resource; a happier transmission of thought, of what passes in the *domicilium Dei*, the Soul; a diviner Language, a language approaching to Inspiration, the language of ACTIONS, the language of a MAN'S LIFE.

Words are but wind, blown from the lungs,
To shake the aspen—vibrate tongues;
Scatter the Sibyl's leaves around us,
Hither blown, thither—to confound us.
But Actions, grav'd on more than stone,
See all things but themselves o'erthrown:
What wind, let men or angels say,
E'er blew a pyramid away?

The general requisition of the Gospel is—not *go and say likewise*, but *go and do likewise*. Of this radical and most emphatic language, *Virtue* and *Self-denial* are the chastest and purest style; a style never embarrassed, never ambiguous, never unintelligible. If this uniformly attests one thing, and the language of words another, the former ought to be believed, and not the latter: the latter is often detected in falsehood and deception, the former never lies nor deceives. *This*, without *that*, is altogether sufficient to authenticate any thing she undertakes to prove; but *that*, without this, is imperfect and mutilated in her testimony, and little to be trusted, even
when

when she most solemnly avers. Let us now make the direct application—determine critically, but candidly, which of the Languages the *Anglican Church* gives the preference to, and generally speaks.—Alas! it will be found, she prefers the language of mere words! *Vox et præterea nihil*. As far as the Egotism of sounds can go, she bears witness of herself, she magnifies, she adulates, she idolizes herself. *But God resisteth the proud, and scattereth the vain in the imaginations of their hearts*. She talks with the consequential flourish, the inflated utterance of the Pharisee. *Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other CHURCHES are*. Nothing can be more certain, nor indeed more obstinately unattended to, than that the same disqualifications which, in the article of divine acceptance, set aside individuals, serve to set aside a Church also. The Apocalyptic Church of the Laodiceans has already been instanced, as a striking example of this. Of these disqualifications, Pride and Covetousness are always marked in Scripture as the very principal. The Anglican Church **MUST** be covetous, because she has attainable worldly objects incessantly in her eye to render her so, and these of high consideration: and she **MUST** be inordinately proud, because, with respect to her members, these objects never fail to stimulate false, extravagant ideas of importance, and perpetuate them: so that preaching up Humility and Heavenly-mindedness, her speech bewrayeth her; her Example contradicts and falsifies her every word she says, and puts every one justly on their guard against crediting her. Here then are two languages spoken at the same time, but asserting different things; both cannot possibly be believed, and only one of them can be true. Example is the only language of mortal construction attended to, or venerated in Heaven: example, therefore, every wise, every well-informed man will, and ought to consider as the only undeceiving language of **TRUTH**; the *lex sacra et ultima judicandi*.

Frame well your Actions, purge from all base leaven, Actions, “as well as thoughts,” are heard in Heaven.

Upon

Upon the whole, then, nothing can be more undeniable, than that the Church of England, in her conceptions and definitions of Truth, must stand or fall by the sovereign test of her private interior Virtue, her characteristic Self-denial, her superiority to this world: but being richly endowed, having a very considerable share of the property of the realm, by investiture and inheritance, as well as baronies, armorial distinctions, and seats of legislative pre-eminence, in her possession; she has brought herself into a situation, cherishing and fondling herself in that situation, where it is impossible she can be excellently virtuous or self-denied: of course, seeing Virtue and Self-denial are its only criterions; as a *Conceiver, Definer, Decree* of TRUTH, she is intitled to no trust, no confidence, no belief, no veneration whatever. The inference remains unshaken, till the premises be disproved; but the premises cannot be disproved, without that guilty ambitude of inferior considerations, local benefits and conveniences, which will serve also, quite as effectually, to banish all sterling truth, all archetypal excellence of Character out of the world. A great, a momentous acquisition, mitres, lawn-sleeves and rochets, in lieu of that—*Peace of God which passeth all understanding!* Conscience smiling with the benignity of an angel in retrospect! in future expectance an Immortality of glory and beatitude!—*What is a CHURCH profited, though SHE gain the whole world, and lose HER own soul? and what shall a CHURCH give in exchange for HER soul?*—While the Church then SINS systematically, incorporately, and unrepentingly, that is, fails to evince so much of a sublime spirit, so exquisite a proof of Christian hardihood, AS TO MAKE AN EMERCEMENT ON HERSELF, she can never comprehend Truth, she can never declare what it is. Would Almighty God take the living water out of its fountain, to put it into broken cisterns that can hold no water? Do men gather grapes off thorns? or figs off thistles?—How am I sanctioned here (but not the Church) by our Saviour's own manner of treating this subject! I repose myself at ease under this rock, the rock of ages! Arguing with the stupid, unfeeling, pertinacious Jews, (hypocritical in every thing but their proofs of dulness)

there

these are his words, John x. 45—6, *Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not ; which of you CONVINCETH ME OF SIN ? and (therefore) when I say the truth, why do ye not believe me ?* The absence, or irreprehensibleness of sin is here made the decisive test of Truth, by an authority not to be questioned, beyond all cross-examination.—But it is time to return to the Church's honesty.

What, Clergymen want honesty?—*If then that light which is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!*—Methinks the British fair might as well lack Modesty, or British coin its current weight. And so the latter often does, and as often unceremoniously do we weigh it in our scales, even with the royal head upon it, which, one should think, ought ever to outweigh suspicion. Since then, in this age of balancing, we scruple not to librate the heads of kings, which some insinuate are the heaviest parts of them ; why should we bashfully hesitate to throw the Honesty of our Clergy into trutination, which, confessedly, is their lightest part?—In consequence then of our libratory province, I would lay it down as a position self-evident, that every Cleric who gives the hallowed sanction of his name, *i. e.* his honour and integrity, to Doctrines drawn up by men like himself (perhaps unlike him in knowledge and wisdom) as containing fundamental divine truths, must be dishonest ; that is, Interest must at the time be the standard of his faith : for true religious faith is a man's interior feeling ; feeling cannot be systematically fixt ; because it is infinitely various, because it is temporaneous or prorenatal (if I may form an English word of three Latin) no more than the heart in its beats, or the lungs in their expansions : now, a man's subscribing to his general state of feeling for a month, a year, a lustrum, much more for the tenor of a life-time—it argues what?—doubtless such a dull-head, such a lumpishness of sense, as no clergyman, no any man could bear to have imputed to him : therefore, in order to give him credit in the article of common intelligence, as being indeed *compos mentis*, we must make him liable to the charge of disingenuity. There is only one way of bringing himself off—his alleging total want of attention and consideration, at the time of subscribing. We will allow

allow him *fairly* brought off in this way; but cannot avoid considering him as very little qualified to teach and instruct others, who, in a matter of weighty moment, could commit an act of lightness and temerity for which a school-boy ought to be whipt.—But to grapple more closely with the argument.—

When a Clergyman subscribes the XXXIX Articles, what is it he *really* subscribes, *i. e.* swears to; for subscription is a recorded oath? I will give him half a Century, till he totters with the imbecility and decrepitude of old age, to resolve the question. Even at that hoary period, if I am not greatly mistaken, it will strike him, dimly perhaps like the setting ray of life, that he only subscribed—the folly and impertinence of the Compilers.—Dr. BURNET, Bishop of Salisbury, near or past his grand climacteric; as deeply read in Church Controversy, as in the ways and characters of men; not less a good than a learned man; with whom for sagacity and acuteness, and what is more, for candor, no present Doctor or Bishop need blush to be compared: he, I say, at the earnest request of his Metropolitan, and indeed with the concurrent desire of all good men, drew up and published a long and laboured Exposition of them, in order to fix and elucidate their meaning. Did he succeed? I venerate the historian of the Reformation, and his *Own Times*: but my sense of duty to JESUS CHRIST, and an affection for my Christian fellows of all denominations, oblige me to declare my opinion, that he did not. Bishop Burnet so little succeeded in his task (a joyless distasteful task *imposed* on him) that he has left matters more obscure and involved than he found them. He did his best, however, to furnish out a theological SEDATIVE to compose his own mind, and those of his dignified brethren. He put his hand to the plow and could not look back, without incurring—*cetera desunt*. Like all other soporifics, however, that would artificially supply the result of perfect sanity and unbroken constitution, it oftener failed than it was attended with the desired effect.—But here the enormous stumbling-block lies across our road, like a Rhodian Colossus in the path-way of a fly—that a Clergyman, that thousands of Clergymen, should, plump and

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at once subscribe Articles, in the predicament, as taken for granted, of being understood, when it is obvious to all the world, that Bishop Burnet, and many learned divines posterior to him, have not been able, by their very best attempts, and deepest study, to bring any thing out of them, consistent and satisfactory!—Where shall we find a palliative, a salvo, an anodyne for this? *Credo quia impossibile est.*—*Pudet hac approbria nobis*—I would ask in what sense the worthy Bishop signed these renowned Articles, when many years after he performed this requisite, he set down seriously to comprehend and explain them if he could; and took up so long an interval in this attempt, as to induce one, without any stretch of charity, to suppose that he had considered them but little at the time of subscribing?—Yet he subscribed them with undaunted hand, as ten thousand have done before and since his time, who did not understand them so well by many degrees as he.—Truly marvellous is the tale, that a body of men should have set down to ascertain and illustrate the truths of our Holy Religion; yet by the very deed should have left them doubly ambiguous! doubly obscure! They articularized them indeed, multiplied them to number XXXIX—an odd number for as odd a composition—but how gloriously had the Compilers merited of the whole Christian world, had they nobly added THIS XLth Article, to have cancelled all the rest! *Pars plus toto. But in vain ye worship me, teaching for Doctrines the COMMANDMENTS of Men.*

It appears that our national Clergy may as well sign the responses of the Delphic Oracle, or a book of Egyptian Hieroglyphics, as the XXXIX Articles, with respect to any perceptions of knowledge that pass in their mind at the time. The punishment inflicted on the obstinate builders of the tower of Babel, was a confusion of languages, by which they were totally at a loss to understand each other: the builders of our spiritual Babel, of Articular Christianity, for a similar act of impiety, seem to have been punished in a similar way—by two Centuries' confusion of ideas——

Bring

Bring here the Talmud to our learn'd Divines,
 Whom sterling sense transports in sterling lines ;
 Bring here the Koran, bring the Book of Sibyls,
 In short, bring any book on earth but—BIBLES,
 Tho' Whist the subject, and the Author Hoyle ;
 Subscription hath more manners than recoil.

Having, I believe, too fully made out a want of honesty in our established Clergy, their alleged deficiency in Common Sense comes next and last to be considered.

Common Sense is that superlative Sense which carries conviction to a man's bosom, whether he will or no, except he absolutely do violence to his own mind, like the unaccountable mortal who, rather than acknowledge he sees the sun, goes and emmews himself in a dungeon, or a cave in the earth. Some men (we must not style them philosophers) can with singular gratification hunt a Metaphysic through all the serpentine deflections of error, all the dark anfractory doublings of dulness and impertinence : some men (improperly called Divines) after having started a Polemic from its *squat* of mystery, pursue it quite delighted, through and over all the quagmires, wastes, drains, underwood, precipices, ditches, thick-nesses and deepnesses of Fanaticism and Superstition ; disturbing every echo, happily reposing in its grot, with the hue and cry of cant-holiness, and the halloo of orthodoxy. Why all this dispenditure of time, constitution and intellect ? their egregious exposure of themselves to the poignant derision of angels and of men ? The reason is obvious. At their setting out they neglected inviting the *mighty buntress* to accompany them—COMMON SENSE, mounted on her Palfrey of emprise ; taking in the expanse of heaven at her nostrils, and rolling in her eyeballs the living fire of the sun : who would have pointed out to them far other game, and led them a far other glorious range of research and adventure.

The very first conception of an Establishment was a violation of Common Sense. It was like bringing the boundless circumfusion of the Sun's rays to hang in the drop

drop of a lady's ear-ring, or sparkle in the brilliant on her finger.—Jesus Christ is splendidly and expressly called **THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**; and the *Enlightener of EVERY ONE that cometh into the world*. Now to confine this Light to an Establishment, was the same thing as saying to the great, divine and universally-shining Luminary of the Gospel, *hither shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud beams be staid*: or, it was the same thing as to have told the Day-spring from on high, when he ordered his Disciples to go and preach the Gospel to every creature: *no, Rabbi! it must not, it shall not be so: to two or three particular cities, to Ephesus, to Corinth, or to Rome, you may if you please extend it: but beyond these, far thence among the Gentiles and the isles of the sea, it must not, positively it shall not be extended*. Your overpowering idea of splendor—as the lightning cometh out of the East and shineth even unto the West—is a mere visionary circum-expenditure of romantic impracticable light: you would have rendered it much more useful, more manageable, more handy, had you judiciously restricted it to the desert, the secret chambers; where the **TRUE** Christ, the **TRUE** Prophet, is always found; to the orbit of a bushel or a feather-bed: for pray, might we not have taken the candle from under the bushel or the feather-bed whenever we pleased, and commodiously reinstated it there again, as often as the light should have proved too strong, too confounding, for our weak eyes, with the mote and the beam in them? and pray does not every light consume and go out the faster, the larger the column of air, its pabulum, around it?—This, however ludicrous it should seem, is the real language of every Establishment, had she but the ingenuous spirit to acknowledge her extreme and preposterous folly.

The Church may allege in her justification (as she is always catching at straws to keep herself steady in blowing weather, always groping for planks, in a tempestuous sea, to preserve her from drowning) that indeed at first Establishments would have been highly improper and ineligible, in the dawn and infancy of the Gospel, before it had diffused itself any considerable way through the nations: but after this diffusion had taken place, were they not obviously requisite and expedient, to preserve it

pure,

pure, original, and unadulterated, in that happy state of diffusion?—On this occasion, as without doubt on every one, how inestimable, how final the interposition of COMMON SENSE!

What gave being to the Gospel, propagated and established it at first, against all human power and rational hope? was it not Almighty God? and was he not as all-sufficient to protect and preserve it, when universalized as he was to render it universal? Perhaps the eternal King of Heaven was grown tired of the task, and disgusted with the service, and obliged, freely acknowledging his weakness, to be strengthened and comforted at the vestibule of a—snail's shell!—It must surely have been so—Like a pulpit-enthroned modern saint preaching himself anti-heretically out of breath, the Creator must have been quite fatigued, quite exhausted with his work; and was fain humbly to petition CONSTANTINE and the COUNCIL of NICE, the former just reeking from the sacrifices of his idols, and the latter composed of men no better than the basest idolaters (Covetousness is Idolatry) to take part of the mighty work off his hands, or in his place—*gerere se pro centro mundi*.—Perhaps JESUS CHRIST, after his ascension to Heaven, (I am persuaded he never *intended* it) some how or another, offended and displeased his heavenly Father; kindled his hot displeasure, and made him swear in his wrath, that HIS shame-faced and unfiguring Religion should no longer interest the special care and attention of the Divinity; but be left to General Councils, Emperors, Kings, Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Presbyters:—"you," addressing himself to his ONCE well-beloved Son, "you indeed were pleased, sneeringly, to call all such *False Christs* and *False Prophets*: but to me it *now* appears (where was my Omniscience, when I gave all power into your hands?) that, instead of meriting the super-eminent title I bestowed upon you, of IMMANUEL, you are indeed the Arch-false-Christ yourself: and that your Religion is no better than your Person; and therefore, proper enough to be the deposit of Oecumenical Councils, CONVOCATIONS and GENERAL ASSEMBLIES—the smuggling frequenters of
the

the Desert, and the money-exchanging jobbers of the Secret Chambers."

When RIDICULE no longer points her dart,
Keen, but not mangling, to transpierce the heart ;
The heart of knavish saints, and fainted knaves,
Whom from contempt hypocrisy but saves :
When, with her sisters, *Irony*, and *Satire*,
(While only goslings poke, and frogs croak at her)
She ceases, *Freedom*, *Virtue*, to defend,
Religion, God's chief gift, and man's chief end ;
Ceases to prove all wisdom—*Common Sense*,
And all true Christian zeal—*Benevolence* :
May she, like Time, but not surviving all,
In desp'rate mood on her own sickle fall.

The notion that Establishments became latterly necessary, though not so at first, is one of those taken-for-granted things, which we must believe on the credit of the *verbum sacerdotis*, i. e. *magistri*. But—has the Hierarchy one *natural* blush at her summons? if not, let her take a little rouge and paint an artificial one on her cheek, while she answers the following question, or attends to the answer. Why did not establishments and endowments of the Church take place before they actually did? Will she answer this interrogation, or shall I for her? —Agreed—I will take the trouble off her hands. Because no CONSTANTINE, no COUNCIL of NICE existed sooner. *Rem acu tetigi*. The very first Prince of this world that offered to become—a nursing Father to the Church; that is, a dispenser of loaves and fishes to the Church; she kissed the hem of his garment—she clung in ecstacy round his knees—she licked the dust of his feet—she saw something substantial even in his shadow—she caressed—she flattered—she adored—she idolized him. —Had Constantine always remained a Pagan (for the repose, happiness, honour of Christendom, what a pity he did not!) it is a matter of doubt with me, if one spark, one jot of Christianity, I mean what a wise, an honest man, could really have called such, would have made its way down to the present times, except—private Virtue and the Bible. Poor substitutes truly (and what only such

such a plain homely character, as Jesus Christ, a Character not of this world, could ever have put up with) for the temporal good things, great things, and splendid things of the Clergy.—Besides had Constantine never left the Temple of his Gods (perhaps Goddesses) what an unspeakable loss had the world sustained in not having in its possession the precious, the delectable remains of the Council of Nice! such specimens of oecumenical literature, of the theological sublime! so inscrutably convincing, and so incomprehensibly admirable, as, I believe, mankind never were favoured with before!—Where there is so happy a mixture, blending so perfectly beautiful, of the best things before Christianity, and to be sure, the best things after it; that is, of Paganism illustrated and set off by the Gospel, and the Gospel finely and gloriously contrasted by Paganism!—Let any one read the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds with his own eyes, without the spectacles of the Church, which indeed quite mar the effect of the above-mentioned anomolo-homogenous compound, and I scarce think he will disagree with me in opinion.—What wonder, his imperial polytheistical Majesty should have brought some of his PECULIAR NOTIONS along with him, to dazzle and surprize his *new* order of Priests; but, alas, not to frighten them!

*Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem,
Testa diu ———*

Often and often have I regretted and been surprized, when the first Reformers were struck with the necessity of a Reformation from the Church of Rome, that they were not likewise struck with a similar divine call, of leaving no necessity behind them for a future Reformation. The spirit of the one was, doubtless, consonant to the spirit of the other: nay, the one was undecisive and but moderately meritorious without the other. It was like ridding the left eye of the beam, but leaving the right rayless and benighted. It appears evident, our Reformers wanted comprehensiveness of mind; that penetrating, undeceiving insight into nature, inseparable from souls equal to great and masterly undertakings; and which would have rendered them FISHERS OF MEN, instead of
loaves

loaves and fishes, *i. e.* Church preferments and benefices; that is, the flesh-pots of Egypt. In the noble and masculine emprise of meliorating and improving, they *put their hand to the plow, but looked back*. Scripture has annexed a severe punishment to this act of delinquency. They left Rome master of supreme triumph, without having bravely purchased the smallest portion of triumph for themselves. The only thing that could have struck the haughty Pontif and his Conclave for ever dumb, and obliged them, *invita Minerva*, to have entertained sentiments of admiration for her schismatic, undutiful Children, even in the very act of glaring disobedience to her commands, would have been, not a partial, mutilated, but whole-length consistence of character, a universality of reform. An unbending steadiness, perseverance, and totality of principle, are always indispensibly requisite in mighty enterprizes, whether in the good or bad extreme: the medium rate, the trimming, un aspiring mediocrity, is never crowned with plenitudinary success. Rome beheld the grand English defection from her authority, not as the result of happy conviction, and universal illumination; but of that incidental fluctuation of human affairs, that fortuitous coincidence of causes, that capricious temperament of mind, that restless, factious spirit, never under the sovereign direction of Reason, Wisdom and Virtue; of which she had had sundry and striking examples, and over which in the end she compleatly triumphed, previous to the æra of our Reformation. As an irrefragable proof of this, we have it on undoubted evidence, that she made formal overtures to the Court of England; and the Reforming leaders of the Church, to acquiesce and join in all their alterations and amendments, provided they acknowledged the single article of her *Supremacy*. However disingenuous and insnaring this ambodexteral offer on her part, it served sufficiently to mark her opinion and judgment of the *Anglican Reformers*, as being selfish and insincere, and rather huffishly and pettishly disaffected to her, than totally from principle alienated and averse. The conclusion was not unnatural, but entirely of a-piece with that interested discernment, that perçant spirit of sagacity, which brought all Europe

(in

an astonishing trance of suspended intellect) to stoop at the footstool of her throne.

*Facta caput mundi quicquid non possedet armis
Religione tenet ———*

Let us illustrate the whole by an example absolutely in point. In the private path of life, who ever thinks deliberately of settling it as a principle to reform just a portion of his conduct and manners, suppose an half, and no more? what sort of a Reformer ought he to be esteemed? how should he look in the immaculate eye of his Maker? in what venerable site of imitation ought he to be considered as an Example? would he not deceive himself, would he not deceive his fellow-creatures, without a possibility (the possibility his only resource) of deceiving his God? should not hypocrisy, interestedness, and impoverishment of idea, a narrowness of conception, a dereliction of Truth and Virtue, be set down as the strongest features of his character?—The case is no way dissimilar respecting a Church, that stops, wilfully and sedately, midway in her advance of Reformation. Whatever is an act of dissingenuity, imperfection, turpitude, selfishness, ambodexteral finesse, in an individual, is and must always be so in a Church corporate. Human Individuals form such a Church; and man multiplied as the dew-drops of Heaven or sand upon the shore, is and ever can be nothing else than—man. In the scale of mortality, foibles, weaknesses and imperfections preponderate: multiply beings thus characterised, and in melancholy proportion you will multiply these very foibles, weaknesses, and imperfections. This is one unanswerable argument against every Establishment of a Church; as it places her in a predicament of labefaction and error, far beyond that of single persons; and so far from constituting her the Guardian, Conservatrix, and Exemplar of true Religion, it absolutely increases and multiplies the danger, of her wounding, debasing, undermining all true Religion. Religion can never be safe but in the bosom of every one. Whatever is the property of all, and every one, is the envy, the interested concern of no one in particular: and of this property God himself is the guarantee, as he

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was

was originally the giver. Property centered in a Party, a Junto, a Corporation, is not naturally and divinely hereditary ; but artificial, arbitrary, and monopolated : of this property, therefore, Man is the sole guardian, as it originated from man ; and of course, it is insecure, transmutable and dilapidable. Who ever thought of impropriating Light or Air by charter or title-deed ? Light and Air, like all other of God's primary gifts, are the common property of all, and cannot be otherwise, without instantly affecting vitality and the Species, by laying violent hands upon human vision, and obstructing that breath which the Almighty himself breathed into our nostrils. But of all sublunary good, Religion is the most universal and unrespecting : and why ? because God, the original and prototype of all things, is its object : therefore, to restrict or locally circumstantiate Religion, or in plainer language, to throw it into an Establishment, is in effect to throw lines of circumvallation round Ubiquity, and to impound the Deity himself to a spot.—Although it is an easy matter, in a disquisitive detail of this kind, to render conviction as clear and luminous as noon-day ; yet, notwithstanding, how difficult is it actually to convince some sort of people !

Sisiphean labour, to recite
 The dews of morn, the stars of night,
 Or Sibyl's leaves, no sooner thrown
 Abroad in air, away than blown.

Striking off then her path of light from the tenebrity of Papal Superstition, from the Temple of Idolatry, circuminvested with the blackness of darkness, the Anglican Church only took oil in her lamp sufficient for half her journey : e'er she had well attained mid-way, her oil was spent, and her lamp went out, leaving her in much such a situation as that from which, way-faring, she set forward, cross-purposed and benighted ; where, ever since, her true-born sons have been groping without finding their way, and, in the mean time, falling foul of one another's steps. They have not even the wisdom of the foolish Virgins : they never yet petitioned for oil from those who have it, and have it too to spare : so that they are likely

to remain where they are, playing hard-heads and blind-man's-buff with each other, if a certain Personage of Tartarian distinction, who is said sometimes to *transform himself into an angel of LIGHT*, presents them not his all-conducting hand, to escort them from their abodes of cœcity.—Alas! the very lepers of Bethesda were more the children of good fortune than they: the pool of reintegration was immediately before them, and always in their sight, whenever any salutiferous hand should give them the happy push: but our medio-itinerant Reformers have not the blessed pool near them, nor have they light sufficient to go in search of it. *O Lux, O ter et amplius divina, quando te aspiceam?*

Have we not now made good our treple charge against the Hierarchy, of her deficiency in *Truth, Honesty* and *Common Sense*? And what is a Church without *these*? it were better she had never been born: or in St. Peter's manly and pointed words, *It had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them*: that is, it had been better she had remained in her first love, in the warm fostering bosom of Rome, where she had it always inquisitionally in her power to chastise those that should teh-hee or sneer at her want of comeliness and want of covering: whereas, in her present state, for the same want of comeliness and covering, she is eternally teh-heed and sneered at, without any resource of punishment in her hands but—*non posse sed velle nocere*: in like manner as the porcupine elevates his bristles, the turkey-cock roughens up his feathers and lengthens the appenditure of his comb.—What a pity, that the State has deprived her of the sword, which she was wont to wield with such singular EFFECT! The State in a mood of guarded inactivity, suffers the finely-tempered blade, except when a Fielding calls for it, a Frenchman, or a Spaniard approaches, to loiter in its scabbard.—What a pity it should rust for want of use, when its glitter might be so easily preserved! but especially when the noblest deodands are in its gift; nay, crowns themselves of illustrious—martyrdom!—What a pity (oh, for the lachrymal female eye!) that the Houses of Convocation have now

been shut for half a Century, maugre the tears and prayers of a whole nation of the—faithful! It is surely a mistake that the prayer of the righteous availeth much. Why then are the Convocation-doors locked up? No, no! the prayer of the righteous has lost its effect, or it has been reversely answered in Heaven. Perhaps Clarke, perhaps Hoadly, those once famed anti-convocation men, have made some strange representations somewhere.—Why, to be sure, they are on the spot, and may insinuate what they please, seeing they have no *mortal* to contradict them: and to send a *viva voce* deputation, to counter-remonstrance in Paradise, before Elijah's mantle is thrown off, I am afraid would not be found so practicable as, for the honour of the Church and legal Christianity, one could ardently wish it to be. But the time will come when a *Warburton*, a *Tottie*, a *Rutherford*, a *Balguy*, a *Toplady*, an *Ibbitson*, shall—think themselves supremely happy to meet these divine men.

I would willingly bring the Church, if possible, to a consciousness of her unaccountable and disgraceful situation. When she separated from her Parent, she affected to condemn Rome's exorbitant claim of power and authority, as totally unauthorized by the word of God, and incompatible with the natural imperfection and notorious fallibility of man: therefore, in recognizing and constituting herself an independent Church, her declarations and manifesto's ran in a much more moderate style of pretension. The altiloquent tone of Infallibility, and universal jurisdiction, sunk into the omnipotence of private judgment, and the all-illuminating light of Revelation. All this was fair, smooth, and plausible. *Sed fronti nulla fides.*

Quâ flumen placidum est forsan latet altius unda.

She no sooner got time to recollect herself, stand upon her own legs, and essay her own strength, which was flattering enough to her vanity, than, without the merit of ingenuously owning it, she put into act that very power and authority she had so affectedly disclaimed and reprobated; drew up decreetorially a set of Doctrines for her members,

members, composed and authorized a particular form of Prayer; and to prove herself not unworthy of her vetust and venerable parentage, imposed subscription: whereby, only just hypocritically rejecting the name, she took upon her all the decisiveness and weight of supreme head, and infallible judge: no one must contravene her right of imposing, no one must utter a reprehensive discontented word under her government, but all be her *mutum, cæcum, servum pecus*. Has the Church of Rome evinced a spirit beyond this, though lying under the pressure of three Centuries, deforming, insulting and abusing her? We talk, and we talk, and eternally we talk, of having made our escape from the Temple of Idolatry, from the Worship of Saints, Images, Relics, &c. But in this self-flattering boast, while we are as noisy as the tympanum, we are quite as empty too.—It is not denied, but we have refrained from bowing down before busts and images, the cold exanimated memorials of reptile beings like ourselves. But what have we done? why, we have substituted in their stead our—REAL selves, existing by the tenure of a breath of air, and preserved in existence by what equally preserves the horse, and the ass—masticating a vegetable or (if we would affect a superiority from an article of food which they have not) rioting on the half-corrupted flesh of a slaughtered sheep or bullock; which we thus requite for clothing us yearly and drawing unrepiningly in our plow!—A sneer of sarcasm may by its ill-timed impotence give a poignancy to the allegation, but cannot withdraw that sting which ought to fasten on our quickest nerve of feeling. *Hæret lateri letbalis arundo.*

*Tho' serpents shed exuvially their skin,
Still are they serpents nothing less within.*

What is it indeed that constitutes idolatry? is it the mere mechanical flexion of knees? of vertebræ?—I may form a figure of well-jointed wood or leather, and give its mouth (for mouth it should have) that peculiar organ-pipe construction by which it might utter sounds and words, even with a degree of euphonic cadence; I might equip this egregious *thing* with mitre, surplice, and lawn-sleeves;

sleeves ; I might inscribe on its thought-vacant forehead, its heart-lacking bosom, ORTHODOXY, ESTABLISHMENT, the CHURCH, or any other Reverend or Right Reverend hieroglyph ; I might introduce it into one of our Cathedrals or Churches, and at the recurrence of certain prayer-book signs and forms, by the well-regulated jerk of wire, make it kneel, bow, and turn with extreme prompt flexibility : but where is the man that would call this same expert figure a devote or rational Christian ? or if it were to perform the very same ceremonial gesticulations to a swine, or a monkey, who would or could accuse the *thing* of idolatry ?—It is not the lingual or labial articulation, the gesture or attitude, but the internal affection, the deliberate Sentiment, that constitutes the idolater : so that our Established Clergy, while they affect to worship God *in spirit and in truth*, worship THEMSELVES—their own importance ; their own doctrinal and literary idols of pen, ink, and paper. Forcing such Compositions, the mere hallucinations of Pride, the figments of Imagination, on the easiness and credulity of mankind, as the Doctrines of Inspiration, is manifest idolatry ; diverting the current of our thoughts, the heaven-descended energy of Intuition, from the intellectual adoration and service of God, to the verbal absurdities, the dead-letter inanities of mortals like ourselves, not less sinful than we are, and not more enlightened. Mr. ADDISON's remark, that admirable writer and excellent Christian, comes in here with peculiar force and aptitude. “ An ignorant devotee affronts the Divinity more than an Atheist ; for it is better to disbelieve a Deity entirely, than to form any notions of him unworthy of the infinite perfections of his nature ?” Nothing can be truer, except that the Church has all along evinced herself this sort of devotee, by forming such notions of the Divinity, and presuming to shelter such doctrines, under his most awful and most holy name, as are a downright burlesque on the infinite perfections of his nature and a libel on his Government ; bringing him down to the extreme insignificance of a petty political ruler—far more—to the sanguinary unrelentingness of a DRACO, the ferocious blood-thirstiness of a NERO.—Had any single person composed and published the XXXIX Articles, as his own private lucubrations, his
own

own atchievement of authorship, in what light should we have considered him at this day? surely, as a pragmatical, unlettered, plodding, benighted enthusiast; not a whit more respectable than the worst of bigots and fanatics that swarmed in England during Cromwel's Administration, or in Scotland when James the Sixth held the throne of that kingdom: men that mistook the greasy glimmer of their lamps for illumination, and for inspiration, the obscurity and intanglement of their own wretched ideas. The single Author that would have staked his fame, his immortality on such a production, might as well have supported the recumbent dead weight of his body with THIRTY-NINE bulrushes or aspen twigs. He should have existed only as an Ephemeron, without even the merit of a butterfly, that entertains us while it lives with the velvet variegations of its wings. But

Defendit numerus, junctæque umbone pbalanges.

The XXXIX Articles, instead of being supported by their own excellence, in point of wisdom, truth, reasoning, Common Sense, are only supported numerically by the appenditure of names; as if John, William, Henry, multiplied to a legion, in matters of divine knowledge, could or should import more than John, William, Henry, taken individually.—In our Houses of Parliament indeed, numbers constitute and legitimate Truth in currency; because in such Assemblies there is no Authority superior to numbers; and because the very same plurality that enacts to-day may abrogate to-morrow, without being accountable to any judicial Court paramount to themselves: but in spiritual affairs, as there is an authority, a standard, a judge, beyond Humanity, to whom there lies an appeal against a CERTAIN DAY, numbers are utterly self-inefficient, *felos de se*; icicles, forming a variety of angles, in order to *warm* us with the representation of solar heat, and solar radiance.

In Scripture, Covetousness is styled Idolatry; so is Gluttony; the first, Idolatry to the mammon of this world; the last Belly-idolatry: it does not mean, that we formally and adoringly acknowledge and worship our Bellies,
our

our Gold, as systematic Gods; but that we bestow on them that fervor and energy of mind, that solicitous care, that never-ceasing attachment, which only of right belong, and should only be devoted to the highest or Supreme Good. Idolatry, in the superlative degree, is the total alienation of the soul, the voluntary translation or exilement of its powers and affections from Almighty God, the first and the greatest Being, in order to place them in outward acts of reverence and devotion on visible material objects: so that Idolatry, though not just in the first instance, may be taken in a general sense, as including all our thoughts, all sentiments and desires, misplaced and misapplied. But there is one species of it that requires particularly to be noticed. It has already, in a preceding part of this work, drawn forth some obvious strictures upon it, but not under the designation of Idolatry: it is SELF-EULOGY, or SELF-ADULATION; than which no vice or crime in all Scripture is more strongly marked with censure and reprobation. It is a misprision of false worship, absolutely of the worst kind, as it never prescribes bounds to itself, and seldom, very seldom, ends but with its object, that is, with ourselves. It is such an obliquity, male-habitude, or idiopathic temperament of the mind, that has only one obstacle in its way (happily an insuperable one) to prevent its grasping all might, power, dominion and authority:—nay, to prevent it from stepping up to the eternal throne of Divine Majesty itself, and ordering the Deity to leave it, as unequal, unworthy to occupy its immensity, viz. IMPOTENCY.—Lucifer with his Hierarchy of fallen Angels, exemplified both the one and the other: cast an atrocious eye of appetency and ambition towards the throne of the Almighty, and in consequence of the attempt, was thunder-struck, and eternally exiled from Heaven. Pride, in the nature and tendency of it, meditates, and, if able, would affect the overthrow and annihilation of every thing or object, whether in Heaven or Earth, obstructive of its progress, or militant against its designs: indeed, disposed and carried in this way to degrees of malignant fatality so enormous, that, in the long eventual run of things, were it not counteracted and retarded by a Power superior to itself, it should become the only surviving being or entity in the universe; infinitely

infinitely forlorn, abandoned, solitary, un-self-sustained:—and, no doubt, should turn the hand of violence upon itself, in the frenzy of unfatigued desires, if only one instrument remained capable of performing the deed, unblunted from the destruction of universal nature.

It is no wonder that almost one half of the Gospel is taken up in discountenancing Pride, and recommending Humility, in the most urgent and pointed terms; as the former tends radically to destroy all Religion, and the latter to preserve it. They may aptly enough be illustrated by two different climates or temperatures, respecting the vegetable world. Where the heat is torrid and intense, nothing radicates, nothing flourishes, nothing produces; every thing is in a state of sickly sameness, languishment, drooping, withering and decaying: whereas, in the temperate moderate degree of sunshine, how beautiful, how various, how charming the landscape!—Let us apply the whole to the important subject before us. The Church of England is one of the most glaring examples we know of this high-toned Pharisaical Egotism, this SELF-IDOLATRY. Whenever she is mentioned (and mentioned she is as often as the cock crows defyingly on his dunghill, the turkey-cock rustles along in the expansion of his feathers) Language is left naked and exhausted of epithets, expressive of greatness, gloriousness, dignity and excellence! her infinite weight of consequential desert cannot have props and stays too finely gilded and decorated to support it; and her sons, her thrice illustrious *badged* and *ticketed* sons, are almost choked with the grandiose consciousness of their own importance.—The natural covering that invests them hath (fortunately for them) more robustness with its expansibility, than that of the storied frog; otherwise martyrological disruptions, among an Established Clergy, would be as frequent as instances of self-disqualification and humility among them are—*Rari nantes in gurgite vasto*.—Is the Bible ever introduced into books or conversation as a subject of eulogy? With what temperance of expression, what guardedness of style, does it glide along the surface of the tongue, or fall atramentally from the pen! nothing can possibly exceed it, but that singular Apocalyptic lukewarmness which
was

was so totally insipid on the palate as to throw the stomach itself into convulsion. *Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* But mention the Establishment, the Prayer-book, or Book of Canons, the tinder-box of the Hierarchy immediately takes fire; glows with all the intenseness of Flattery, and flashes around the coruscant lightning of panegyric.—And after all, what does it mean? what is the sublime result of the whole? Why, neither more nor less than—Clergymen magnifying Clergymen—Curates magnifying Rectors—Rectors magnifying Deans—Deans magnifying Archdeacons—Archdeacons magnifying Bishops—and Bishops most gloriously magnifying one another. In this altisonant rotund of praise, we have a true instance of the *perpetual motion*, I believe the only one we ever shall have, or need hope for.—*Wo unto you*, says A CERTAIN PERSON, *when all men shall speak well of you. Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your heart: for what is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.*—These are passages full of pointed significance, according to some vulgar apprehensions. But what of that? they have not their authority from the Prayer-book, or the XXXIX Articles, consequently must be—Apocryphal. Who hath supreme authority in controversies of faith? *The Church.* Who fixes the sterling value of the Word of God? *The Church.* What is the reverse of sterling? *spurious and base.* Who hath a right to re-judge the judgments of the Church, or call her juridically to account? No man, no body of men upon Earth.—Therefore—*finis coronat opus.—Probatum est.*

Who can forbear smiling at Bishop Taylor's eulogium on the Liturgy, taken from his preface prefixed to it? "Its composition is so admirable, that the most industrious wits of its enemies can scarce find out an objection, of value enough to make a doubt, or scarce a scruple, in a serious spirit." And why was the composition of it esteemed so admirable, so accurately, so infallibly inspired, as scarce to be the occasion of a doubt or a scruple (a character which the Bible itself never got?) Why, because

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the good Bishop had a very considerable hand in the composition himself.

With needle's point the very thing
Is touch'd, that must conviction bring.

The worthy Bishop is all the while extolling his admirable, his incomparable SELF ; or if not directly himself, some of his most excellent Right Reverend Brethren, whose wisdom, knowledge, and learning, he probably thought, had by no means been undervalued, by having been brought *near* a level with his own. The purport of the Episcopal boast takes in the following words. *Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are*—in my understanding and intellectual abilities, *I thank thee that I have been so eminently furnished, by thy Holy Spirit, with spiritual gifts and talents ; with so decisive and penetrating an insight into divine things, as to put thy glorious Gospel, which for many Centuries had lain in so forlorn a state of imperfection, beyond almost the possibility of a doubt or a scruple. Lord, I thank thee, that what thy inscrutable wisdom did not deem meet to communicate to Prophets and Apostles, thou hast graciously communicated to ME, the least of all saints. Most blessed Lord ! WHILE this mitre adorns my head, with unceasing lips will I inscribe to thee all honour, power, glory and dominion.*

How do we fly from *common sense, common discretion, common decency*, when we are taken up in the contemplation of our mighty, our illustrious SELVES !—Instead of Bishops adoring and worshipping GOD, THE ALMIGHTY FATHER, *in spirit and in truth*, they are all the while idolizing their own miserable and wretched spirits ! miserable and wretched indeed, in spite of kings and princes, palaces and revenues, mitres and rochets ! Take a worm from its bed of earth, its investment of slime, put it in a casket of the purest gold, lined with the richest velvet of the loom, and externally studded all over with diamonds of the first water ; what should it be in its glorious habitation but a—WORM !—The English Church-Service is an abortion in itself, an emprise of systematic impiety ; because, by being ushered into the temple of
God

God with the loud-resounding trumpet of self-adulation, it avows and cherishes the sentiment of doing the Supreme Being honour by advancing its own glory and importance; that is, by means directly the reverse of those he himself has enjoined—*Humility, debasement and self-denial, a broken and a contrite spirit*. Every epithet, every expression, it utters in praise and celebration of God's holy name, it has, by the mouths of the Priesthood expended on itself, a thousand and ten thousand times; styling itself *the most excellent, the most perfect, the purest, and the wisest* Form of Religious Worship upon earth, on which neither doubt nor scruple can lay the soilure of a dirty finger: so that, instead of its Reverend and Right Reverend repeaters and pronouncers acknowledging themselves insolvently indebted to Almighty God, it should seem rather that Almighty God has been put under the necessity of acknowledging himself (if he had any gratitude) deeply indebted to THEM.—It is virtually a fact, that our Bishops, Deans and Doctors, officiating according to Forms of their own, in their Established Churches, instead of worshipping the infinite invisible God, are worshipping themselves, are worshipping one another, the vagaries of their own brains, the erratic flights of their own imaginations! thinking they shall *be heard for their MUCH SPEAKING*, and using VAIN REPETITIONS *like the Heathen*. Rather than stand in this predicament of misplaced worship and erroneous devotion, they ought to have staid at home in their closets and studies, bowing down to a crucifix or picture of the Virgin Mary. Idolatry, vary its outside, its language, ceremonies, attitudes, gestures, plausibilities, as you please, is still idolatry:—and for my part, I should as soon idolize a leek or piece of garlic, at any time, as the Pope of Rome, or any other Pope whatever, even should he be found within the
—BRITISH CHANNEL.

Thro' ev'ry Protean shape and form it shifts,
The oyster moves not, tho' its shell it lifts.

If Moses and Aaron, without the immediate command, the special appointment of God, had put together a system of religious Rites and observances, comprehensive of the whole

whole Jewish nation, and obligatory upon every individual ; in what light should they have been beheld by the People, when it is considered, that even with the visible protection and authority of the Almighty, they on sundry occasions, failed in their respect and reverence for these high and sacred characters ? And with regard to God himself, had these eminent Personages interfered so officiously, should their guilt have been held a whit less in magnitude than that of the builders of Babel, who, contrary to divine interdiction, wanted to erect a perpetual monument of their prowess and importance ?—A punishment similar to that which overwhelmed these impious workmen, at least as exemplary and conspicuous, should, no doubt, have overwhelmed Moses and Aaron, had they, without any commission from Heaven, taken the ritual and ceremonial weight of legislation upon them.—Now, if the great law-giver and high-priest of the Jews had certainly incurred singular guilt and punishment by such a procedure, what Power, what Commission invests Christian Bishops with authority to decree Rites and Ceremonies, or judge finally in Controversies of Faith ?—None possibly. So far from it, that, in their capacity as Decreeers and Judges, considering they had the momentous instance before their eyes, of Almighty God's having totally destroyed all Rites and Ceremonies, by destroying the Jewish Temple and Religion, in the person of his Son, they have incurred a higher species of criminality : nor will it be in their power, aided by all the helps of learning and ingenuity, to assign any reason of wisdom and prudential government, why God should have abolished the Jewish Ritual Religion, if he indeed intended to empower the Christian Priesthood to substitute and establish one in its place. The exterior showy parade of worship is in every respect as likely at this day to lead men astray from pure sentimental devotion, from *worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth*, as in the days of Jewish Superstition ; on every occasion, as likely to deceive our understandings, and corrupt our hearts *now*, as then to deceive and corrupt those of the Jews.

Error is Error still, tho' seven
Proud hills exalt it high to Heaven ;

Begun

Begun in nastiness below,
 Around his Holiness's toe.
 Men lit'rally are men, howe'er
 They change their climate, habits, sphere;
 The same now, sadly it appears,
 As twice ago two thousand years :
 For this, the best of human reasons,
 Our Natures form'd not like the Seasons.

How entire and perpetual the aversion of Almighty God to the revival of Ritual, ceremonial worship, may be clearly evinced from a certain fact recorded in History, as truly memorable, as it is indisputable. The Emperor JULIAN, in the haughtiness and impotency of his spirit, in order to throw discredit and odium on the Christian Religion, which had excited his mortal antipathy, conceived the bold and daring design of rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem, which had been utterly destroyed by the Romans, and of restoring the disgraced and scattered Jews to the full enjoyment of their national worship. It was no doubt a suggestion of deep malignant policy, effectually laying the ax to the root of the tree, had his power been equal to the omnipotence of his intention. But what was the consequence of this hardy and insolent attempt? Almighty Power itself interposed: globes of fire bursting from the earth disconcerted and dispersed the workmen, as often as they returned to their labour, so that they were obliged entirely to abandon it; leaving the chagrined and disappointed Emperor the full satisfaction of willing and planning a work, the execution of which he obviously saw was controuled and counter-acted by a Power superior to himself.—*Quid Aulti proprium? Non posse et velle nocere.*—The fact stands upon evidence not to be controverted; no less than that of Julian's own historian, who at once celebrated him as a hero, and revered him as his Master. Other evidence might have been liable to cavil and suspicion, *this* cannot. The historian is Ammianus Merce-linus. His words are too remarkable not to be quoted. Speaking of his mighty design, "*Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam Templum sumptibus immodicis instaurare,*" he says, "*negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochenfi. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius juvareique*

*juvaretque Provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes secere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum: hocque modo elemento quasi repellente, cessavit inceptum *.*—Notwithstanding this signal interposition of Divine Providence, to prevent the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, yet very observable it is, that God permitted even a Heathen Temple to be built on the very spot where that of Jerusalem stood, by HADRIAN, who apparently had done nothing to merit a divine preference, rather quite the reverse. But who does not at once see the reason? By suffering Hadrian to build a Temple to his Gods, on the sacred and beloved spot, no permanent injury could accrue to that benign and blessed Dispensation which JESUS CHRIST had introduced into the world; introduced with powers and authority sufficient to protect and extend itself, against all the united efforts of Polytheism: whereas, had JULIAN been suffered to complete the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, and of course, restore that peculiar form of Worship connected with it; Almighty God had at one stroke counteracted his own intentions, and undid his own work, by invalidating the entire prophetic security of the Gospel, which all along was uniformly and expressly predicted to be established in place of the Jewish Dispensation.—The above is one of the many irrefragable proofs, which sincere Christians have still in their possession, to demonstrate with what care and tenderness the MAKER and FATHER of the world watched over the exact fulfilment of those Prophecies that were typical of *Christ's* Coming, and pre-sentimental of his generous and liberal Religion: so that, not only *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings did he perfect praise*; but also from the pens of the most inveterate opposers, the most virulent enemies of Christianity, from Heathen and Idolaters themselves, did he educe the most splendid evidences of his Son's divine Mission; who in the fulness of time, and as pointed out by innumerable predictions in his *Person, Character and Office*, appeared in our world, perfected the great work given him by his Father to do; was cut off, *but not for himself,*

* Amm. Mercel. Hist. lib. 28, viges tertio.

himself, and then gloriously exalted to the right-hand of the Majesty on high.

Nothing should seem so preposterous as the renovation and establishment of *that system*, to prevent which, when it was attempted violently to be reintroduced, by an ambitious enterprising mortal, the Governor of the universe interposed miraculously. We have no rational cause to think it was the mere putting together of stone and lime, the rearing up of dead, senseless walls, that so particularly offended the Great God of Heaven, and required extra-human interposition to defeat the design. No! this should never have been *dignus vindice nodus*.—It was the prevention of that peculiar mode of Religion, of unessential, ostentatious worship, of Ritual, Ceremonial parade, which for so many ages had only proved its own insufficiency and imperfection, that so signally met with divine discouragement and rebuke. Every thing therefore of a similar nature in modern times, however sanctioned by length of duration, supported by numbers, and set off by various circumstances of splendid distinction, is virtually a conceived, avowed attempt to REBUILD the Temple of Jerusalem, and restore that exterior of religious Service which has ever been found incompatible with inward integrity and unaffected holiness: so that it is impossible for a true Christian Philosopher, a Gospel Cosmopolitan, to contemplate Establishments of Religion, including the authority of decreeing Rites and Ceremonies, and determining Controversies of faith, in any other light than as the deliberate acts of ANTICHRIST; of that Power, that *Man of sin*, by which Satan keeps up his embittered opposition to Christianity upon Earth: by which he partially defeats its most excellent purposes, and would in the end radically destroy it, were he not omnipotently overruled. Modern Hierarchies being kept in countenance by a variety of specious pleas, and lightly-conditioned plausibilities, is a circumstance directly against them; and rather shows the subdolous refinement, the sagacious artfulness of the great Enemy of mankind, who invisibly, by the instrumental medium of Pride, Ambition, Riches and Honours, directs all their springs and movements. TRUTH never attracts or captivates by any one adventitious circumstance

cumstance or artificial device whatever: her unadorned form of spontaneous grace and beauty is so intrinsically perfect, so irresistible, so divine, that we are struck, transported and attached, before we can command recollection and language sufficient to tell *why*. An angel of celestial splendence approaching us with the official regalia, the little gew-gaw ornaments of a civil Magistrate, nay, of a Sovereign Potentate, would immediately create distrust, and an idea of inferiority; because we know, that Satan himself can sometimes *transform himself into an angel of light*. An affected tedious parade of proof will always serve to convince us where Truth is *not*, but never the reverse. The Romish Church herself is not behind any other in her resources of apology and subterfuge. *Baronius, Bellarmine, and Calmet*, have discovered abundance of learning and ingenuity in her cause: yet after all, her antichristian features are too strongly marked to be mistaken. Nor ought any Church resembling that of Rome, in pride, ambition, secularity, superstition, hypocrisy, and a lawless spirit of usurpation, be freed from the approbrium of being Antichrist; for St. John tells us, *there are many Antichrists*. Even a distinguished member, and let me add ornament of the Hierarchy, has left behind him the following remark which, like all *his* sentiments and opinions, breaths nothing but generosity and a liberal dignity of thought: *the Bishop of Clogher's* words are these, "The word *Antichrist*, in the language of the Scriptures, is not confined to any *one* Person, but may denote any number of Persons whatsoever, who were to set themselves in opposition to the true Doctrine of *Christ*, for says John, *Even now are many Antichrists* †.

It would appear then, far beyond a random conjecture or flight of extravagance, that every Establishment of Religion is, *quoad potestatem*, a revival of Jewish times, manners, and superstitions—that is to say, it in truth amounts to the enormous sentiment of building Temples altogether similar to that of Jerusalem, viz. in ROME, FRANCE, ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, &c. which, without all doubt, remain as certainly to be destroyed

† Dissertation on Prophecy, page 184. Dub. Edition.

stroyed before a farther Reformation, or diffusion of Christianity can take place, as the antient Temple, in the days of our Saviour, remained the object of prophetic destruction. The old Temple subsisted in perpetual obstruction to the Gospel, from the narrowness of its bottom: our modern Temples subsist in the same site of obstruction, and from a parallel cause.

All mortal things to mortal periods tend,
Like their beginning, like must be their end;
Dust unto dust the doom on all inscrib'd,
A sentence none e'er flatter'd, none e'er brib'd:
But Spirit, pure, bright, holy, never dies,
Its breath eternity, its range the skies.

Even abstracted from this, what else are our modern Religious systems but fastidious vaunting declarations of our own egregious consequence; the excellency of our wisdom, and the immensity of our attainments; whereby pure, native, unaffected Revelation loses not only its credit, but its usefulness in the world! We have interwrought so much of our own with the simplicity of the Gospel; interwoven so much speculation and vain hypothesis with the plain and obvious Truths of Christianity; that Almighty God, in our public and stated celebrations of his Service, is defrauded of his proper integral worship; a considerable portion of which we throw into channels leading directly to ourselves, and suggesting our own personal desert; *id est*, in having composed this, that, and the other *fundamental* Doctrine of the day. This is self-flattery in the extreme, and so criminal in itself that it has fitly been styled SELF-IDOLATRY: so that the Priesthood, officiating in the Sanctuaries of God, appropriate in effect one half of the worship to themselves. They really cannot any way avoid it, as so considerable a portion of the Service is actually their own composition, that is, *inspiring*, and not the immaculate inspiration of the divine and infallible Spirit.—Even with relation to one of the most presumptuous and unwarrantable Forms in the offices of the Church, which absolutely sets aside the awful adjudication of the *Last Day*, that of ABSOLUTION; hear in what a lofty tone of holy extravagance good

Bishop

Bishop Taylor expresses himself. "If they (the Forms of solemn Absolution and Benediction) be not highly considerable, there is nothing sacred in the Evangelical Ministry, but the Altars themselves are made of unhallowed turf*." Here all Religion is made to stand or fall, by an eminent Prelate, with a ceremonial Form of mere human institution, which subverts the very basis of Religion, by taking the power of supreme arbitration out of the Creator's hands, in order to place it in those of a CREATURE.—Hence the guilt of intermixing our own with the thrice sacred Doctrines of CHRIST: while we affect dutifully to respect and venerate the latter, we are all the while only offering up incense to the former; our wretched pride and vanity always obtruding themselves in the way of that accurate test, by which the bullion is ascertained from the dross, the sterling from the counterfeit coin.—It is in short the perpetuation of that act so particularly reprehended by our Divine Master, of putting *new wine into old bottles, and sewing new cloth on old garments, by which the bottles are bursted, and the rent is made worse*: a beautiful comment on which we have in the following declaration of St. PETER. *It had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them* †. Peter's Master expressed the same sentiment, in terms still more terse and pointed. *If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth* ‡.

How happy for the Anglican Church were Self Idolatry the only species of that flagitious crime she commits! When I read the Litany, and there observe she addresses God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and these again together in the concentrated form of a Trinity, as FOUR separate, supreme objects of Prayer—I would look upon the adoration of herself, in establishing certain conceits and reveries of her own, and introdu-

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* Downes's Lives of the Compil. of the Liturgy. Page 210, Appendix.

† 2 Peter ii. 21.

‡ John ix. 41.

cing them into the Temple of God, as part of his immediate worship, as a mere peccadillo, as a straw floating on a mass of foul stagnating waters. While so glaring an outrage against Common Sense, Common Decency, and the indivisible Majesty of the one sovereign, eternal, self-existent God, stands in the front of her Establishment; how can she consider herself in any other capacity, than as mocking the DIVINE BEING, and throwing his Public Service into burlesque and ridicule! While she continues to particularize two other SUPREMES beside Himself; nay a third Supreme, strangely manufactured and mixed, what does she better, how does she honour him more, than the Pagan Romans did, when they entered their Pantheons and bowed down to a multiplicity of Gods? The learned and intelligent among these Heathens had the very same plausible plea in their favour, which the MEMBERS OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH make use of at this day. Notwithstanding their devotions were directed occasionally to a plurality of Gods, they penetrated beyond this plurality to one ultimate and supreme Cause, who presided over all, and in whom all responsibly centered. Indeed, we might more accurately say that, in effect, the multiplicity consisted only in the one great *Supreme* acting in different characters, and under a variety of designations. For instance, in the interior celestial regions, he was denominated *Jupiter*—in the air, *Juno*—in the sea, *Neptune*—in the earth, *Pluto*—in hell, *Proserpine*—in the element of fire, *Vulcan*—in the sun, *Phæbus*—in Augury, *Apollo*—in war, *Mars*—in the vintage, *Bacchus*—in the harvest, *Ceres*—in the forest, *Diana*—and in the Sciences, *Minerva*.—More need not be mentioned, as from the above enumeration it appears evidently, that the Polytheism of the enlightened Antients ended in the Unity of God. Even St. AUGUSTINE himself, a celebrated Christian Father, is not backward to acknowledge this †.—The Hierarchy shelters herself under this very apologetical finesse; alleging, when she addresses God the F. God the S. and God the H. G. that she still only addresses one God, distinguished by his Personalities. But when her learned

Doctors

† St. Aug. de Civ. Dei lib. 4, chap. 11.

Doctōrs set themselves about explaining the word PERSON, it turns out to be an individual, infinite, intelligent MIND : now, we have three individual, infinite, intelligent Minds ; *ergo*, we have three Gods. The truth of the first establishes the truth of the last. The following definition of Persona, or Person, is extremely accurate, which all the definitions of the schools by no means are : indeed, it cannot possibly be defined in any other way, when applied to the Deity. *Personam definiunt esse naturæ rationalis individuum substantiam*. As thus defined, Person must be integral and whole : a part it cannot be, for a part actually in existence, respecting Intellectuality, is utterly impossible, a contradiction in terms : therefore, three co-equal intelligent WHOLES (in the highest sense) must be three eternal, self-existent Gods. But if we can suppose three eternal, self-existent Gods, we may alike suppose three thousand—in short, any number indefinitely we please, till we exceed even the Heathens themselves in the number of our Gods, as they exceed us in their apologies for worshipping more than one.

The Romish Church has carried this matter of Plurality so enormous a length, that she seems all along to have been determined, in her rage of adoration, to worship every thing, or any thing, whether in Heaven or in Earth, but the one true God.—Nay, in this particular, so wanton, so abandoned has she been, that, with respect to idols, she has even ventured to allege the authority of God himself—against himself ; bringing his own words to contravene and nullify the obligation of the Ild. Commandment. No depths of impiety, in short, are too horridly profound to deter Priest-craft, lusting after the glories and honours of this world, from wading and plunging in !—Near the beginning of the VIIIth Century, in a Council convened at Rome against *Iconoclasis*, Gregory Ild. in a speech, by which in person he opened the Assembly, sets forth (among other things as true and as credible) that “ God commanded Moses to make two Cherubims, *Thou shalt make two Cherubims of gold* †. And Solomon also made within the Oracle two Cherubims

† Ex. xxv. 18.

Cherubims of olive-tree ; and he overlaid the Cherubims with gold ; and he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of Cherubims, palm-trees and open flowers †.—You see, my beloved Brethren, what Moses did, what Solomon did, the greatest of lawgivers and wisest of kings, by God's own appointment and express command : and much more ought we to adore Christ our Lord, his holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles and all the Saints, by their sacred effigies and images. They are, it is true, inanimate things, and the work of mens hands ; and so were the Cherubims and the Ark : but yet God operated and was glorified by them ‡.” —In consequence of this matter being so logically, so piously stated, by Pope Gregory and his Council, we scarcely need wonder at the practice of the Romish Church ever after, not only in worshipping material representations of *Jesus Christ*, the *Virgin Mary*, down even to the splinters and rusty nails of the Cross, and dried pieces of the ass's skin on which it was alleged our Saviour rode to Jerusalem ; but also with the most audacious profligacy, and no longer restrained by even the appearance of decorum, in making representations of the incorruptible God like unto corruptible man ; oftentimes exposed to vulgar worship, oftner to vulgar derision and contempt, in streets and market-places, on panes of glass and common sign-posts.—No one can read such accounts of wickedness and abominable profanation, without feeling his nature shocked and wounded within him ! without indignantly pitying the wretched blindness and ignorance of the infatuated multitude, so led astray by a fordid, licentious, tyrannical Priesthood !

From the above instance of Gregory's learned labour, to justify the Idolatry of the Romish Church, it is plain the *Anglican Hierarchy* is not singular in her attempts of the same kind : nor should it seem a matter of small triumph, that she has the example of the supreme, infallible Pontiff to keep her in countenance. In one respect, however, she has acted somewhat inconsistently. She

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† 1 Kings vi. 23. *et infra*.

‡ Bow. Hist. of the Popes. Vol. III. Pont. Greg. II.

ought certainly to have placed the Virgin Mary on the same line of deification with her truly divine Son. Methinks the salutations she received, previous to the birth of *Jesus Christ*, would have sufficiently authorized her in this particular. First, that of the Angel Gabriel. *Hail thou that art highly favoured! the Lord is with thee! blessed art thou among women!* Afterwards that of Elisabeth. *Blessed art thou among women! and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!* The form of salutation is exactly similar to the Mother, and to *the fruit of her womb*. Nay, Elisabeth is struck with astonishment and admiration at the circumstance of Mary's condescending to visit her, which she thus rapturously expresses. *And whence is this to me, that the MOTHER of my Lord should come to me?* Mary herself looks forward far into futurity, and thus felicitates the high distinction and happiness of her situation. *Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed.*—The Romish Church indeed has fulfilled her prediction in this respect, with a witness: *that* of England has, since the æra of Reformation, been all along on the other extreme. Not a syllable do we hear of Mary's singular Blessedness; the egregiously Reformed Church having been wholly taken up in fixing and maintaining the SUPREME Godhead of her Son: not advert- ing to the above *equal* ascription of Blessedness both to Mary, and to *the fruit of her womb*; which should have immediately checked the infinite unparalleled preference of the *last* above the *first*, in the Church's Calendar.—When a certain man addressed our Saviour, saying, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck*: he replied, *nay rather Blessed are they that keep the commandments of God.* The Church should have taken a salutary hint from this remarkable answer, at the time she meditated to bestow such high ceremonial honours, such exalted nominal distinctions, on Jesus Christ. Most certainly, merely ceremonial and nominal; for Almighty God, at the birth of our Lord, could not possibly have put on any essential renovation of nature, being *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. A Godhead, being *born*, a Godhead *putting on*, at any given period, a *new* specific appearance or characteristic identity, is a contradiction *per se*, a stretch of extravagance and absurdity from

from which the human mind revolts, by that eternal law of intuitive intelligence stamp'd by the finger of God himself; which may lie concealed, either under the rubbish of Superstition, or the gilding of splendid prosperity, but cannot be obliterated.

Let us pause a little at the Angel Gabriel's announcement of Jesus Christ, while he was yet in the womb of Mary. *He shall be great, and shall be CALLED the Son of the Highest.* There is a temperature of being here, a subgraduated style of dignity, never to be referred to the supreme and eternal God. He shall be great—an expression of simplicity only connected with subordination; an expression applied to John, yet in the womb of Elizabeth. *He shall be great in the sight of the Lord; and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his Mother's womb.* And what Gabriel meant when he said our Blessed Lord should be called *the Son of the Highest*, he himself afterwards fully explains. Obviating Mary's very natural incredulity, on so astonishing an occasion, seeing she was only betrothed to Joseph, and not actually married, these are the Angels words. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, THEREFORE also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God* †. That is, by the simplest turn of sentiment and idiom of language, because Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was conceived out of the general course of Nature, by God's immediate act of omnipotence, therefore should he be called, distinctively and pre-eminently, the Son of God. I know not whether the above passage has been considered in this particular light before; but to me the explanation now given seems altogether conclusive. We have a perfect individuated Being under the appellation of that HOLY THING, originating from the power of *the Highest overshadowing Mary*; in other words, by an act of omnipotent efficiency: but who will have the unconfounded temerity, the infatuated hardness to say, that the infinite, unoriginate, self-existent God conceived and brought forth HIMSELF by the instrumentality of Mary? Yet *all the members of the*
English

† Luke i. 35. See the whole chapter.

English Church must say so, if they believe their *Credo*, and Articles. They bring themselves off indeed by jurisdictional *ipse dixit*s, and imperial *sic volo*'s; by the veriest abuse of speech, and the most ridiculous Logomachy; which will equally serve their purpose on any other extravagant, monstrous occasion. *Wo unto them*, says the Prophet, *that put darkness for light and light for darkness* †. By this unaccountable transposition of darkness for light, and light for darkness, we have a Pope (Antichrist) at Rome; an Episcopal Pope in England; a Presbyterian Pope in Scotland: in consequence of which tripartition of the *POPEDOM*, we have the most palpable absurdities thrust down our throats, not the least horrid of which is, that we have *THREE* Gods, nay a *FOURTH*, by the process of sophistical composition, instead of one!

Let us bring *JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF* upon the stage; that amiable and truly divine Personage, who knew not what it was to deceive, knew not what it was to conceal himself under the trick and ambiguity of language, like a serpent hid in flowery herbage. One remarkable passage, in which he is the principal collocutor, will serve the purpose of a thousand, to ascertain the idea he had of himself. The Jews accused our Saviour of Blasphemy, *because that he being a man made himself God*. How pertinent, satisfactory and unaffected our Lord's reply? sufficient, one should think, to have established the distinctiveness of his Character for ever, in opposition to the Churches of Rome, South and North Britain. *Jesus answered, is it not written in your Law, I said, ye are Gods? If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God*. John x. 34-5-6. Here is a juxtaposition of objects, presented to the Understanding, which should at once carry conviction. The natural meaning of the whole is this. Is it extraordinary, that I should call myself simply *the Son of God*, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world; *i. e.* made to be born, commissioned by a super-human exertion
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† Isaiah v. 20.

of his own power (not according to the ordinary procedure of things) when Rulers and Governors heretofore among yourselves, to whom only the word of God came, were actually called—not merely Sons of God, but Gods?—The matter of surprize is deduced from the greater to the less degree; abundantly demonstrating that moderation of sentiment, that humility of mind, always beautifully characteristic of our Saviour. The contrast between the appellation Gods, and the Son of God, cannot be mistaken, by those that are satisfied to abide by the sober, discreet decision of Reason and the Understanding, instead of indolently suspending their Faculties in the torpid, benumbed listlessness of MYSTERY. This Reason, this Understanding, our Saviour happily styles **THAT LIGHT WHICH IS IN YOU.** *If therefore that Light which is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!*—Great indeed, in all those that can form and cherish the conception of **THREE SUPREME PRAYER-HEARING GODS,** distinctly named, *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost*; and think to bring themselves off by the quibbling schoolboy prettinesses of the Alphabet!—

Our Lord goes on to observe. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* Here Jesus Christ submits to be received or rejected according to the evidence he produces from his Father. He does not say, *If I do not the works of God the Son, believe me not,* but *if I do not the works of my Father*; by which the idea of co-equal filial Godhead is at once annihilated; over and above the impossibility of God's ever leaving the alternative to his Creatures, of acknowledging him God or not God, agreeable to our arbitrary conceptions of the proof laid before us.—The original procedure of the Creator in this momentous business is positive, unconditional, and sovereignly imparative. *Thou SHALT have no other Gods beside me.* His identity he did not suffer in the first instance to become the subject of examination, but fastens it directly on our belief as a command. Indeed any other conduct would have been utterly inconsistent with the infinite, primordial, incomprehensible Majesty of the **DIVINE BEING.** But when a Personage in a delegated Character, acting under a Commission, made his appearance,

pearance, before the bigoted, incredulous multitude, he was under the immediate necessity of referring to one greater than himself, by whose sole appointment he acted, and whose Commission he bore: of submitting to be credited or discredited according to the evidence he exhibited, of his being really sent by God, and invested by him with powers superior to humanity. Nay, so uncontestedly evident, as it should seem, is this state of the matter, that our Saviour puts himself out of the question altogether, his own personal Identity, and desires the Jews to consider only the works, his Miracles, which he wrought by *the spirit of God* (another Evangelist calls it, *the finger of God*) and to be convinced accordingly, *Though ye believe not ME, believe the works*: a sentiment and liberty of disjunction, respecting himself, totally incompatible with the notion of co-equality.—Jesus Christ came—not to identify the Being of a God, or to establish the belief of it, as if it had not been established before; but simply to prove that he acted by the express authority of God, and that he was sent by him. His prayer at the grave of Lazarus leaves no room for doubt here. *Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me: and I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the People which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* This very idea Martha had of him, which is thus expressed. *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died: but I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ASK OF GOD, God will give it thee.*—With respect to the belief and being of a God, our Saviour looked upon it in so clear and palpable a light, that he considers it as a mere matter of reading. *What shall I do*, said a certain Lawyer, *tempting him, to inherit eternal Life?* He (Jesus Christ) *said, what is written in the Law?* HOW READEST THOU? He (the Lawyer) *answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy Neighbour as thyself.* Here is a remarkable circumstance, that cannot be too durably imprinted on the memory: without any new conceptions of the Deity, other than what were contained in the Mosaical Law, before the personal appearance of Jesus Christ, *i. e.* the simple unaffected idea of the Divine Unity, our Lord stated

stated the terms of Acceptance and eternal life. *And he* (Jesus Christ) *said unto him* (the Lawyer) *thou hast answered* RIGHT: THIS DO, AND THOU SHALT LIVE. Luke x. 25, 26, 27, 28. In another place he also says, *If you would enter into life, keep the Commandments*: and he assures us that ALL the Commandments hang on these two (are comprised or comprehended in them) *to love God with all our heart, with all our strength, and with all our mind: and to love our Neighbour as ourselves.* So that, instead of introducing a new hypothesis, or oeconomy of the Godhead, instead of introducing a new Religion, or new terms of eternal life, Jesus Christ came only to recognize, illustrate, and confirm THE OLD; which, during the long interval of Prophecy, from the time of Malachi, had almost been wholly destroyed, wholly banished off the face of the Earth. His own declaration is expresse to this purpose. *Think not I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*—The Moral Religion of the Jews therefore, the Belief of one God, without any addition whatever, other than what is contained in the Decalogue in plain language, is and necessarily must be, the Religion, the Belief of all Christians; inclusive indeed of one simple historical fact, of infinite importance, as the above mentioned recognition, illustration and confirmation, totally depend on it, that Christ the Saviour of the world, *is come in the flesh*, under the designation of the Son of God.—The Saviour of the world from, darkness, ignorance, barbarity, superstition, polytheism, idolatry, tyranny and oppression: the bare acknowledgment of whom, in this character, additional to our observance of the Jewish Moral Law, makes a Christian. *If ye believe not that I am he* (the Christ) *ye shall die in your sins.* These are our Saviour's own words, John viii. 24. The affirmative then is Eternal life, upon acknowledging Jesus to be the Christ. The Eunuch said, *What doth hinder me to be baptized?* (to be made a Christian) Philip said, *if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.* The Eunuch answered: *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* Acts viii. 36, 37. The expression or form of initiation is often varied, but the sentiment is always the same: for instance, *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is*
come

come in the flesh, is of God. 1 John iv. 2. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.* 1 John v. 1.—The only difference then between a Jew and a Christian is, this simple acknowledgment on the part of the latter: and superadded to this, if there is any thing new in the Christian Dispensation beyond that of the Jews, these words of our common Saviour contain it. *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.*—By this gentle, obvious method, which does no violence whatever to our minds (and surely whatever does violence to candid, honest minds, must have been put into act by the Sons of violence) is our most holy Religion brought back to its native, archetypal, divine simplicity; and all the trash and lumber of the Schools cleared away. By this easy, rational method, are all those enormous doctrines buried centre-deep in their own ruins, that would over-cloud in Mystery, that is, annihilate those excellent original Faculties, by which we discriminate between Truth and Falsehood; Light and Darkness; God and Man; Happiness and Misery.—By this auspicious method shall our scattered spirits be called back from Theory to Practice; from gazing with simpleton-expansion of face at meteors and streamers (shooting far beyond our sphere across the sky) to attend, more upon our proper level, to the thorns that encompass our steps, the blocks that project assant our path, and the fatal precipice that just lies before us.—By this blessed method shall we come to the serene possession of our own minds, the immediate consequence of which will be, to allow others the serene possession of their's: no longer imbibittered and vexatiously led astray by such arbitrary, phantastic, nominal distinctions as—*Heresy and Orthodoxy; New Light and Old Light; Conformity and Nonconformity*: mere implements in the hands of the great Enemy of mankind, *the Father of lies*, to counteract the benign, gracious, and amiable purposes of Christianity: to effect which he always finds too many coadjutors, too many fellow-labourers, among all ranks of men, not excepting *the Orders of Priesthood*; who are, alas! by the unhallowed baits of ambition, riches and honours, artfully thrown in their way, too readily disposed to support the pillars, and extend the boundaries of his Kingdom.—*Even now there are many Antichrists,*

Antichrists: many false Propbets are gone abroad into the world.

From what has been laid before the reader, not with more earnestness and plain-dealing, than the occasion should seem to require, methinks the charge of Idolatry, systematic Idolatry, has been sufficiently made good against the Church of England; notwithstanding her theological plea of words, her monotonous and eternal jingle of orthodox bells; which, like other chimes, affects our ears, as it affects the desert air itself, mechanically.—The Church of Scotland is equally involved in the charge: nor can either Church pretend to the pure and original characteristics of the Gospel; ever hope to be successful in diffusing divine knowledge, truth and virtue, while she remains fundamentally allied to that grand, that universal corruption, which preceded the coming of Jesus Christ. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? no, not one. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*—In fact, the present condition of the *Scottish and English Establishments*, in the eye of the independent Christian Philosopher, would seem to present a face of chastisement from Almighty God, for their gross and persisted-in deviations from the pure, simple and holy Religion of HIS SON. How are their very vitals rent and torn into a thousand pieces! How many vultures, how many harpies, brought up and nourished on their laps, gnaw their tenderest springs of life, squeeze them in their fangs, and prey upon their bowels!—Sect after sect, secession after secession, springing up in their most delicious spots! cursing the mothers that begat them, and the paps that gave them suck!—then falling out among themselves, splitting into subdivisions and cursing one another!—Who can number the various kinds of Dissenters, or Non-conformists in England? *Orthodox Dissenters, rational Dissenters, Methodists, Westlites, Whitfieldites, Moravians, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers*: flying in each other's faces, and tearing one another's eyes out!—Who can number the various kinds of Seceders in Scotland, *Burghers, Anti-burghers, Gibbinites, Arskinites, Cameronians, Bostonians, Congregations of Ease, Congregations of Relief*: flying in each

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each other's faces, and tearing one another's eyes out! —I have only hinted at such as are entirely separated and distinct from each Establishment. But in the Establishment itself, what heart-burnings, discontents, prevarications, hypocrisies, smittings of Conscience and buffetings of remorse! Dignitary actually writing against Dignitary; Presbyter against Presbyter; with all the inflammability and virulence of Party-spirit:—while Bishops, the *gubernatores Ecclesiæ*, roll in their chariots, wrap themselves in their aulic robes, and—*care for none of these things!*—with broad faces ligneously unmoved, like painted and gilded effigies on the stern of ships, amid the thunder of the tempest, the agitation of the deep.—Even in the day of battle, when the Standard of Reformation ought to be spread, and all invited to assemble and marshal themselves under the wings of its expanded Doves, some of her choicest leaders throw up their commissions, and retire, deeply struck with the Poet's remark.

The post of honour is a private station.

Which if true in a political sense, in a religious one must be super-eminently so. Whoever, in his line of prescribed duty, cannot act with virtuous consciousness and integrity, and, therefore, magnanimously signs his resignation, stands directly on a level of disinterestedness with that illustrious Personage who withdrew himself from the multitude, who by force would have made him a king.—ALEXANDER conquered all the world, except one *little* monarch whom he never could conquer, and who saw the haughty Macedonian at length expire in the condition of a slave—HIMSELF: but such men, as the above, by conquering themselves, conquer more than the proud Son of PHILIP ever did.

He who on Earth boldly confesses me,
Before my Father's throne confess'd shall be;
His mighty Angels witnessing around
My Servant with immortal honours crown'd †!

Such

Such was Dr. CLARKE, who refused a Bishopric, repeatedly pressed upon him, with unexampled nobleness of mind, rather than do violence to that Mind, by launching farther into the hypocritical prevaricating trade of Subscribing. Such a proof of Wisdom and Virtue, of enlightened understanding and excellent heart, should ever be accounted paramount to all others: nay, every other proof is inaccurate, un consequential, and insincere.—Such men more latterly are Dr. ROBERTSON and Mr. LINDSEY: who from deliberate choice, rational and mature conviction, and with serene dignity, unregrettingly gave up what half the world resign their Consciences to secure—their establishment in life, their livelihood, their earthly all.—There is something in such a conduct so morally sublime, so great and worthy, so exalted above the common level of Humanity, that I cannot help venerating them as the brightest characters of the age. A Metropolitan in comparison, standing in the fullest lustre of his station, approached with deep reverence, adulation and punctilio, if he has neglected satisfying his Understanding, like a wise, holy and discreet man, with regard to what he has SWORN to believe and inculcate; or if he knowingly acts under a restraint in this primordial duty, for fear of plunging into that trying situation where he must either abide the pungent reproaching consciousness of dissimulation and infidelity, or absolutely resign his honours and his appointments: I say, a Metropolitan, thus critically circumstanced, in comparison with such highly respectable men as those above mentioned, I would look on in the most inferior, undervaluing light; and would hand down to Posterity, if any thing of mine could reach Posterity, in worthless and disgraceful memorials.—A Metropolitan acting in such a capacity, and presiding as chief Governor over a great body ecclesiastic, sympathetically disposed to act like himself, can never, when accurately examined, be considered in any respect a different character from those of the Jewish Rulers; who went the length even of COMMANDING (when they obviously saw all other expedients fail) that no one, upon pain of being expelled the Synagogue, should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This extraordinary procedure of meanness, of malevolent impotence, is thus mentioned by
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the Evangelist. John ix. 22. *The Jews bad agreed already that if any man did confess that he (Jesus) was Christ, HE SHOULD BE PUT OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUE.*—In truth every Establishment speaks the same language of authority. *If any man shall confess that Jesus is the Christ, i. e. in Peter's words, confess him a MAN approved by God, by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him* : confess him, in these terms of St. Paul, that MAN whom God hath ordained, and by whom he will judge the world in righteousness† : or in these, as the one Mediator between God and Men, THE MAN Christ Jesus‡: he shall be put out of the ESTABLISHMENT.*—Confessing him as God, is worse infinitely than not confessing him at all ; as it directly makes him the object and instrument of Idolatry, that enormous crime, the total extirpation of which, brought him principally into the world : for he himself expressly declares, that he came not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law ; the first grand obligation of which was to worship one God, and one only. The Jews were rejected and their Temple destroyed—by no means for not acknowledging the Lord their God, one Lord, but for not acknowledging a quite distinct Personage, Him whom the Father sent, Jesus, the Christ! Our Saviour no where (positively no where) accuses them of Idolatry or mistaken Supreme Worship : so far from it, that he associates with them himself in the Temple, and joins them in the public worship of HIS Father, and the God and Father of ALL : but in numberless places he sharply reprehends and upbraids them, for not recognizing and receiving him as the promised Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive.* John v. 43. So that the matter is brought to a short decision : either Jesus Christ, worshipping along with the Jews in the Temple, was, *ipso facto*, an Idolater ; or our modern established Christian System, that of Creeds, Articles, and Confessions, is Polytheism direct and avowed. There is no room for evasion or escape here : if the one be true, the other must be false ; and if the one be false, the other must be true. The Church at this instant is brought to

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* Act ii. 22.

† Acts xvii. 31.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

the most piteous and distressing dilemma ; either to look upon Jesus Christ as a cheat and impostor, over-reaching and deceiving the Jews, by pointing out no one alteration in their antient original worship of God : or be struck home with the conviction, that she has all along been guilty of Idolatry ; and that it behoves her immediately to return to her first love, and acknowledge with St. Paul, *that although there be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven or in Earth, Gods many, and Lords many ; to us there is but one God, THE FATHER ; and one Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Corinth. viii. 5, 6. Paul does not say, one God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost ; the Trinity in Unity ; the tripartite or rather quadruplicated IDOL of Popery : but simply and unaffectedly, *One God the Father*, excluding all other titles and conceptions of him whatever, the mere dreams of schoolmen disordered in mind ; the mere sophistry of verbal and puerile distinction.

A particular consideration occurs here, which cannot but deeply affect the discerning reader, both as a Philosopher who ardently wishes the establishment of Truth, and as a Christian no less ardently wishing the universal establishment of the Gospel. It is this: While the Church retains her present unintelligible, as well as unscriptural Doctrine respecting the Deity, she throws an impassable gulph between the Jews and their conversion ; renders their becoming Christians utterly impossible, and thus boldly and hardily withstands the fulfilment of Prophecy concerning them. Indeed, in another and simpler sense, she obstructs, nay altogether opposes the Conversion of the Jews ; that is, by existing as an Establishment. She can never pretend to convert this misguided and unfortunate People, but by bringing them back to that narrow bigotted policy, and involving them in those cumbersome Rites and Ceremonies, from which *Jesus Christ* came purposely to set them free : so that by her interference they should still be Jews in strictness and propriety, notwithstanding their new baptismal regeneration, *i. e.* episcopal initiation into the labyrinthine mysteries of ESTABLISHMENT. Rites and Ceremonies, and a politico-secular Constitution of Religion, are and ought to be held no more sacred and inviolable in England, in the

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year MDCCLXXIII. than those their prototypes were in Judea about the Julian period, MMMDCCCCXLVIII.

The Church of Scotland stands in the same predicament of impotency and disqualification. The Church of Rome, the original model of all local incorporated Churches, need not be mentioned, as all the world knows, that instead of passively standing in the way of their Conversion, she oppresses and persecutes, even unto death, this dispersed and deluded Nation.—Our divine Saviour tells those *Jews that believed on him* (John viii. 32, 36) *Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free: if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* The Freedom here premised is not, cannot be a freedom from human frailty and sin, for in this respect even his own Disciples were not made free; but it should seem rather a Freedom from outward spiritual bondage, the dominion and tyranny of Priests; with which is always connected pride, arrogance, self-idolatry, deep dissimulation, fraud, falsehood, interestedness and sordid worldly-mindedness; the most offensive and complicated sins to which we are liable. Other sins are casual, sudden, vibratory, and occasioned by the instant temptation; not coolly meeting us half way, but surprising us before we find ourselves well self-gravitated on our legs: but those sins above-mentioned, are systematic sins; gradual, deliberate, unconstitutional, created, indulged in, and unrepented of. How strikingly is this distinction confirmed and illustrated by the uniform conduct of our Blessed Master! Natural instinctive sins, even magnitudinous ones, and marked as capital by human Laws, with infinite placability and condescension he pardoned, in more than one instance: but the craftiness, hypocrisy, deceit, avarice, vain-glorious boasting, superstition and bigotry of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, in no one instance did he ever pardon; but branded them at all times with the strongest censure and severest rebuke, always assigning them their portion where *the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

In this liberal, comprehensive view of the subject, in which only it ought ever to be viewed, is it to be marvel-

led at that some choice and noble spirits should be so powerfully struck with the unworthiness and impiety of a certain modern Establishment, as to quit their stations in it altogether; instead of holding their paltry TITHES, their hierarchic plumes of feathers, and thereby, under a coaxed or stifled conviction, taint the sanctity of their own minds; offend *God*, their Creator and Father, and *Jesus Christ*, his beloved Son, our great Teacher, Example, Mediator and High Priest?—Should they act otherwise, against the light of their Understanding, and the plain evidence of Scripture, they could not expect to be considered, by discerning and impartial Posterity, other or better than Jews; voluntarily, that is, systematically rejecting Jesus Christ, as their Master, their Deliverer from Bondage, by continuing incorporated slaves to each other; tied down in obedience to the civil Magistrate, with whom, as subjects of Christ, they have nothing to do; and next tied down in corporation-obedience to one another: Archbishops to the Metropolitan; Suffragans to Archbishops; and so downward till you come to the last removes of hierarchical precedence, the Curate and the Bellman. In the mean time, and during all this sacerdotal *routine* and *fricas* of submission, JESUS CHRIST remains a mere cipher; a piece of ermin sewed along the border of a Prelate's robe, or fold of lawn nicely turned up on his sleeve! Instead of being a *living bead*, he is treated as a mere *caput mortuum*, a king of clouts; and instead of inviting all to come and thirst no more at the fountain of living water, he is no better than thrown by in a corner as a broken cistern that can hold no water.—True, he is stuck up God in Litanies and in Creeds—a Pharos to keep all men off from the sandbanks, hidden rocks, and faithless shallows of a Persecuting Establishment.—Gracious and amiable Lord!—How surpassingly hard his fate!—Antient times beheld him arrayed in the mock attire of Majesty, the crown of thorns, and the robe of purple, before he was led out to be crucified—even crucifixion deemed a gentle punishment for the Saviour of mankind!—Modern times while they reject his authority and despise his commands; barter the Son of God to courts and courtiers for preferments, titles and sinecures; erase his name out of the public Articles

eles and Service of the Church, and substitute the name
 of a MERE Man; nay, it has been known, of a MERE
 Woman: they clothe him in a jerkin of alphabetical Di-
 vinity; write GOD THE SON on his forehead; with
 mockery and insult place him before the altar in his logical
 attributes, his metaphysical accoutrements, and beslobber
 his name with the tawdry of responses, the slippery of
 adoration!—Nay, honest, unaffected Disciples and Lovers
 of their Saviour, who positively will not, because they
 dare not do what they esteem worse than not Confessing
 him at all, are put out of the Synagogue.—Put out of the
 Synagogue?—No! this were a lenient, a benign punish-
 ment.—By their spiritual Lords and Masters, our Reve-
 rend Nebuchadnezzars, they are expressly threatened,
Whoso falleth not down and worshippeth the image which
they have set up, to be cast into the midst of the burning
fiery furnace.—It is well: even in this forlorn horrific
 situation, SOMEBODY like unto the Son of Man, should be
 seen walking in the flames, all serene and majestic, look-
 ing into inactivity the scorching element, and breathing
 it into lambent coolness!—Let the indignant reader attend
 to what follows, the winding-up of the Athanasian faith:
 He therefore that would be saved, must THUS think of
 the Trinity—And lest so supertranscendent a specimen of
 a man-manufactured Deity should not have all supreme
 adoration paid it, we have one entire Article of the En-
 glish Church, solemnly to sanction and secure it. Article
 VIIIth, *The three Creeds* (which consubstantially are but
 one, in honour of their subject) *the Nice Creed, ATHA-*
NASIUS's Creed, and that which is commonly called the
Apostle's Creed, ought THOROUGHLY to be received and
believed; for they may be proved by most CERTAIN war-
rants of holy Scripture.—So wonderfully is fulfilled St.
 Paul's prediction (even upon record in our Churches and
 Articles) of *that man of sin which should be revealed, the*
Son of Perdition: opposing and exalting himself above all
that is called God (that is, creating and ordaining Gods
 to be worshipped on a line of equality with the Father, a
 power which God himself never assumed) *sitting in the*
Temple of God, and shewing that he is God: whose coming
is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs,
and lying wonders. Our Established Churches have all
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the powers of this world at their back, whether punitive or remunerative ; and, I believe, it will be granted, that Satan, or AMBITION is the grand first mover of all, having all signs and wonders at his command.—I know it is fondly imagined that the Church of Rome is particularly referred to here ; but with what propriety, as exclusive of all others, I cannot by any means see. Certainly, every Church whatever, resembling Rome, in her sun-clad characteristics of Idolatry, Tyranny, Superstition, Intolerance, Persecution, Covetousness, Ambition and Pride, must be considered as sitting for the above picture, so strongly delineated by the Apostle. Nay, he himself directly intimates as much. Some hundred years before the existence of Rome Papal, was penned the following passage, annexed to the description of the man of sin. *The Mystery of Iniquity doth ALREADY work* *. John also has a similar expression. *Even now there are many Antichrists*. So that we may have what St. Paul calls a *strong delusion to believe A LIE*, even while we fondly soothe and flatter ourselves, that we are the very ESTABLISHED standards of Truth.

Where one man leaves such a Constitution of the Church, against which there lie objections so momentous and decisive, we may well be surprized we have not the example of hundreds. Yet from the paucity of instances, those distinguished Individuals, who have had virtuous hardihood enough actually to set the divine example, derive the higher degrees of merit and applause. Such rare instances serve to verify Cicero's fine remark. *Qui se ipse norit, intelliget se habere aliquid divinum, semperque et sentiet et faciet aliquid tanto munere dignum*.—In fact, nothing short of illumination from the Father of lights himself, should seem adequate to that effort of the mind, by which we calmly, nay cheartully resign the bewitching temptations and good things of this world, from the holy and generous love of TRUTH ; a celsitude of moral excellence scarce ever attained by Philosophy, properly so called ; although it would appear confessedly the point at which it has ever aimed, and uniformly ambitioned to attain. Indeed, it is the *magnum totum* of true Wisdom, the only object it can possibly have in view ; as

* 2 Thessal. ii. 7.

all other things are readily and always attainable without it. The great and valuable purpose of Christ's coming, was to inspire us with the ambition, and furnish us with the powers of conquering the world, though presented to us in its most *formidable* aspects of pleasure and gratification. He conquered it superlatively himself, by discovering, at all times, the most pointed and superior contempt of its flattering and alluring objects. His Disciples caught the heavenly impulse of self-denial from him; copied in their lives the endearing precepts of their beloved Master, and left their shining Examples, additional to *his*, upon record. But the divine afflatus seems to have ascended with their glorious and immaculate Spirits to Heaven, from whence it came. Few even of their immediate descendants in the office of the Sanctuary, had it to their degree: and those their successors later down in Posterity had it not at all. In process of time, the very opposite System was adopted and universalized, by the Governors and Guardians of the Church: Establishments were founded, that set the Gospel at nought in this leading particular, by rendering it altogether impracticable for her Members NOT to be tempted and seduced by this world, unless they resolutely throw up their connections with the Hierarchy altogether, and resolve to stand before God with only the BIBLE in their hands, and CONSCIENCE unwounded in their bosoms. Such high and venerable Characters—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*—we have known. Even at this day of general corruption, vicious ease, and effeminate indulgence, *some* such excite our admiration, and engage our esteem, but cannot exhaust either. Bishops and Dignitaries may, perhaps, sneer at them with the fastidious breeding of a Court: but the brightest talents, most various learning and polished erudition, superadded to all their glitter and pomp of appearance, will fail to preserve their memories from being forgot; while that of those who never deserved, though they abundantly shared their sneer, will be remembered, will be applauded, will be revered! nay, may it please your Right Reverend Lordships, will be IMITATED by an enlightened, virtuous and generous Posterity! for nothing will or can endure the wrecks and devastations of Time, stand in serene, emboldened propinquity to another world, to Heaven;

Heaven, and the Last Judgment, but SELF-DENIAL, HUMILITY, and HOLINESS.—Even on this side the grave, amid the turmoil and fluctuations of false Ambition, a deceiving energy of pursuit, methinks I see, methinks I hear the Saviour of mankind, never forgetful of his Church (himself) from the lucific bending of a cloud, at some auspicious moment of attention, whispering these delightful consolatory words in the ears of his Servants, the sons of integrity and disinterestedness. *Verily I say unto you, there is no man that has left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or LANDS, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold in this time, and in the world to come eternal life.* He adds indeed—with persecution: but how graciously does he qualify it! how divinely does he gild the bitter pill! *If they shall persecute you, they also have persecuted me. The Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord. If they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household. Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls: for I will give you a mouth, and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. These things have I spoken unto you, that IN ME you might have peace: in the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*—These all are the words of our dear and beloved Master; in their fulness of encouragement and consolation, more than sufficient to compensate for any exterior loss, or damage, we may sustain in the world, by an honest conscientious discharge of our duty; especially when backed by this declaration of the same blessed COMFORTER. *Heaven and Earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*

Let those of another class, who, in order to preserve their worldly possessions, a false standard of character, a precarious, artificial dignity, would take a mean advantage of the Powers of this world, legally to oppress, brow-beat

beat and discountenance the self-denied, disinterested, unassuming Servants of their Lord, take heed to themselves, while they read over (if ever they read over) the following explicit and solemn assurances of Jesus Christ himself: for full as he is of condolence, comfort and thearful felicitation to his faithful unaffected friends and Disciples; he is, nevertheless, armed with censure, rebuke, disapprobation and condemnation, towards all those who, notwithstanding they figure in the livery and trappings of his service, are the sons of Hypocrisy, Vain-glory, Avarice, Ambition, Intolerance, and Worldly-mindedness; consequently the greatest enemies both of Himself and his divinely-spiritual Religion.—*Whosoever shall be ashamed of ME, and of MY WORDS, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. Wo unto the world because of offences: it must needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh! Whoso offendeth one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*—All those are HIS little ones that believe in him, who give up, for his sake; resign their houses, lands, worldly subsistence, and cast themselves on the bosom of PROVIDENCE, at the same time, that they repose their spirits in the bosom of TRUTH. This forfeiture, this voluntary resignation, when it comes to the push of Conscience, the crisis of Judgment, is the only certain and unadulterated test of duty to God, the only criterion of Truth. *Whoso loveth the things of this world, the love of the Father is not in him. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* This directly applies to persons overwhelmed with the prospect of impoverishing and distressing their families, should they loudly and openly exclaim against the Idolatry, superstition, corruption, and sordid secularity of the Church. But let them take heed to themselves, when their families, houses, and lands, come into immediate competition with their supreme allegiance to God, and dutiful obedience to his Son Christ Jesus. The admired, the popular,
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the darling doctrine, established in THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE, will not bring them safely or honourably off, although it preserves the mitre on the AUTHOR's head. *What is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God. Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation. How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* Is a Bishop, or Church Dignitary, any thing else than a MAN? is he not RICH? and, therefore, does not the whole weight of these texts fall upon his head? Can the circlet of a mitre, investing his Right Reverend brows, ward off the danger, by breaking the force of the Scriptural blow? It may attract more eyes to the example, but will not attract one single wish of the spectator to stand in place of the example. Punishment and misfortune require pity, but not gilding.—*The stone which the builder rejected* (for being too plain and unadorned) *the same is become the head of the corner: whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*

Notwithstanding all these self-evident deductions, our Bishops and illustrious Church Governors assure us, nay we have their OATH for it upon record (as if we should not have taken the simple word, the declarative yea or nay of men in such dignified stations) that they have Truth on their side: still more, that they are the heaven-appointed Guardians and Repositories of Truth.—A little tabby dark-eyed mole, stepping forth into day, and offering the accommodation of its hillock to Solomon in all his glory.—What proof condescendingly do they give us of it? no better than CHARLES STEUART gives us of his right and title to the British Diadem—THEIR WORD, the *verbum sacerdotis*, the *verbum Episcopale*. But is not this the VERBUM MAGISTRI? and does not the Author of our Religion positively forbid us to call ANY one Master, ANY one Father, in spiritual matters, upon Earth? Supposing then we take their word, with perfect civility and breeding, what shall or can indemnify us for disobeying wilfully HIS command? If in any one instance we disobey

obey it wilfully, we cease that moment to be his Disciple: we forfeit that integral fidelity, that duteous totality of sentiment, which can never be made up, even by fulfilling every other precept he hath left us. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* The young man in the Gospel had in the gross, or general type of his character, so indearingly acquitted himself to our Saviour, that he *beholding him* LOVED HIM. But—how momentous a but! —ONE THING he lacked, and that one thing absolutely shut him out from the Kingdom of Heaven. *Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come and follow me.* When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, FOR HE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS.—The only difference then which even ingenuity can find out between the Church and this young man, is the latter going away sorrowful: whereas the former wraps herself round in self-gratulation and self-adulation, as with a garment, quite transported with the thought, that she *is increased with goods, and has need of nothing*: leaving it to be *more* than recollected at the LAST DAY, that even in her very meridian of boast she was *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*—The Church has LARGE POSSESSIONS, and it is a doubt with me, that she can realize half the young man's merit: how then can she flatter herself with receiving a more favourable verdict than he? And *where her treasure is, shall not her heart be also?* Undoubtedly: our Saviour assures us of it.—When she talks to us therefore of Truth, let her style be ever so polished, and her voice ever so a'tiloquent in orthodoxy, we cannot possibly believe her, while she continues to caress, in the dearest recess of her bosom, the most dangerous enemy Truth has—*Riches and Honours.* Our Lord himself with unparalleled ingenuoufness and generosity acknowledges, *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.* John v. 31. And shall we believe the handmaid, the Church, in preference of her Divine Master, when she so pompously, so arrogantly *beareth witness of herself?* Our Saviour did not wish the Jews to depend upon his word or affirmation, because this would have been no better than the common trick of all Impostors, forcing credibility, without producing

ducing it : he refers them to a test which can never be assumed by any but those who immediately act under a divine Commission, to his MIRACLES. *The same works that I do, bear witness of me, that THE FATHER HATH SENT ME.* John v. 36. Now, in this way his Character, Mission and Authority were established, and only in this way could ever have been established. Without them, he should have been no better, no more respectable a person than THEODAS *boasting himself to be something, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves:* or JUDAS OF GALILEE, *in the days of the taxing, who drew away much people after him,* Acts v. 36, 37. But what works hath the Church to refer to, as her own witnessing of herself, will not, cannot be taken?—None assuredly, beyond that of *Theodas or Judas of Galilee, who both perished, and as many as obeyed them were scattered and brought to nought.*—Gamaliel, a Jewish Rabbi, may even at this day, in the above passages, teach our Established Churches the wisest lesson they ever were taught : a lesson no where to be found in Creeds, Articles, Confessions, Canons, or Acts of Assembly ; those wretched substitutes for the Scriptures of Truth ; which are not capable, even of entertaining our ears as a GARRICK or a FOOTE should entertain them, while they cloud our understandings, vitiate our affections and corrupt the principles of our hearts ; so pitiful are they in their composition, so miserably poor in their style.—I know many eyes (it is impossible for hearts to feel them) run them over with fond delectation and reverence. What then ?

Tho' Argus' eyes quadrupled at their call,
One HONEST eye were better than them all.

The same eyes that so delectably, so reverently run them over, look a little farther—to mitres and rochets, to stalls and sinecures. What should the first be without the last ? the shell divested of its pearl. Were they not kept together by such golden fastenings, they should have been suffered long ere now to be blown away, like the Sybil's leaves. But what says our Lord ? *If your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light ; but if your eye be*
evil,

evil, (ambitious, covetous) your whole body shall be full of darkness.

It is a circumstance no way honourable to the human character, and far less to the Christian, that, excepting Dr. CLARKE, we have not, to my knowledge, any instance of a modern Clergyman refusing, steadily and from principle refusing, the Episcopate: and among those who have declined or given up inferior preferments in the Church, from the same noble disinterested spirit, I believe we cannot add above two to Dr. ROBERTSON and Mr. LINDSEY: a generous and respectable Duumvirate, whose fame will flourish when the renowned Roman Triumvirate is no more.—Is it because, in many thousands none other of their Brethren have been struck with the unhappiness of their situation? from their prescribed duty as members of the Hierarchy, and the sensibility of their Conscience acting in repugnance to each other? This can never be admitted, till we have reason to look upon these *more* than Right Reverend Gentlemen, as visionary enthusiasts, mere lovers of singularity, romantically fond of innovation, and errant dupes to their own restless fluctuating tempers. The reverse appears manifest. With infinite pains, guarded, prudential procrastination, calmness of spirit, and sobriety of mind, together with that silent, but effectual supplication to the Hearer of Prayer, for light and guidance, which he himself has enjoined, the whole interesting affair was begun, conducted and concluded: indeed with that decorum, consistency, moderation, recollectedness and perseverance, which the love and admiration of TRUTH can only inspire.

Non sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo.

With equal degrees of excellent learning and means of information, but above all, with equal degrees of candor and conscientious delicacy, it is impossible but the bulk of the Established Clergy must think, however they may be disposed to *act*, like their dissentient, but truly Christian Brethren. The learning and information of the latter may, I believe, be set down as characteristic of the majority of those that compose the Establishment: why then should

should their avowal of a Reforming, independent spirit be inferior? I will defy the utmost charity to find out another reason, than their want of the above candor and conscientious delicacy, and their being sheltered under the equivocal palliatives of expedience and utility; such as, considering the world *as it is*, and not what it *ought to be*: a maxim replete with too much Lyolian sophistry and interestedness to *become* the holy mouth of a venerable Reformed Protestant Church.

This celebrated, and I am truly sorry to say, HOAD-LEAN maxim, has, with regard to truth and propriety, a retrospect, as well as reference forward to futurity: as effectually tends to criminate and *undo* that Reformation we have already (thanks to Heaven!) undergone, as to discourage and prevent any future Reformation: so that the literal amount of it would, along the comet's aphe-
 lion path, conduct us backward to Rome Papal, and set us down adoringly in the Temple of Idolatry. From the pens and mouths of Churchmen, it disgracefully implies their disavowal and abhorrence of the Pope's Jurisdiction, in order *ONLY* to act and continue Popes themselves. The wish is natural, but the means so universally adopted to disguise and sanctify it, are at once disingenuous and vilely arbitrary; rather worthy of the Vatican, than an aggregate body of Protestant Divines.—Beside, of what use are the Clergy, if not to make the world what it *ought to be*, instead of supinely and lazily taking it *as it is*? For my part, I know of no purpose whatever they can serve, unless to render us numerous and striking witnesses against them at the Last Day; or to qualify them as Examples to illustrate, or rather identify the following singular description of the Jewish Priesthood. It grieves me to the very soul, that any part of it should have an unfavourable aspect towards the memory of THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER; whose character I shall ever highly respect and venerate, as, together with his incomparable friend CLARKE, he laid the foundation of that liberal Enquiry, that excellent system of spiritual independence, which has been so nobly extended since his time; and whose farther divine extension will, it is most likely, never cease till, long with the Gospel of Christ (*par nobile*

nobile sororum) it has embraced, without confining, the world.

Contra hominem justum prave contendere noli.

The Prophet's words are these. *The WATCHMEN are blind—they are all ignorant—they are dumb dogs—they cannot bark—sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber—yea, they are greedy Dogs, which can never have enough—they are Shepherds that cannot understand—they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter.*—The lineaments of our modern *Watchmen* and *Shepherds* are here so strongly marked, that it would be affronting the Reader's sagacity to draw out the lines of comparison between them and their antient prototypes of Israel. It is no wonder Reformation's gentle voice, which is the voice of Truth, no wonder the still gentler whisper of Conscience cannot awake them from their profound slumbers, unless—when they look to their own, *EVERY ONE FOR HIS OWN FROM HIS QUARTER.* With what melancholy pointedness may we insert here the words of Jeremiah! *Run ye to an fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that SEEKETH THE TRUTH, and I will pardon it.*

Let us apply the maxim of our Anti-reformers, our *Watchmen*, our *Shepherds*, our *dumb, greedy, lying-down, slumbering Dogs*, to moral conduct; it is a test by which it must obviously be tried before it can pass for any value, or with any currency. I am afraid the Libertine and Voluptuary will find their account in it much more than the Clergy, who ostensibly are our Teachers and Examples. To consider the world then *as it is*, and not as it *ought to be*, why should any one wish or ambition to be better than his neighbour, his fellow; more knowing, more virtuous, more excellent; even supposing that neighbour an adulterer, a drunkard, a liar, a slanderer, an hypocrite?—By taking the world *as it is*, the world in return will take us *as we are*; so that under the security of a reciprocal act of compliançe, we may be *as vicious, as*
licentious,

licentious, *as* we please by which the fatal ax is at once laid to the root, not only of all Virtue, but of all Religion.—In consequence of this, a man's Taste shall be his supreme judge; his pleasure, his law; his success in every emprise of the flesh, his sanction; his glory, his shame; and his God, his belly. Philosophers shudder and look pale at the thought: but DIVINES have brought on a *necessary* insensibility with regard to it, by their own voluntary avowed position.—The maxim then by being applied to moral behaviour, proves its own futility and inconsistency. They are conspicuous at the first glance. But moral rectitude always depends, in its energy and steadiness, on our attainments and advances in divine knowledge; so that, whatsoever curtails and obstructs these, must unavoidably curtail and obstruct *that*: like drags on a waggon or chariot, which by impeding one wheel, impedes the opposite one likewise. I am afraid this will be found the melancholy reason, why, in these latter ages of the Church, we have gone backward, rather than forward, in all godlike simplicity and holiness; though Christianity was particularly designed and calculated to promote these.—It is no wonder, considering that all Gospel improvement and melioration have been locked up in Articles and Confessions (like treasure in a Miser's box) under the trimming accommodation of an admired, but insidious maxim. While the progress of divine wisdom, of knowing more and more, is put under an interdict; is suffered lazily to loiter in the palaces of Bishops, stagnate in their studies, and slumber in the warm hap of their robes and rochets; how shall we be virtuous or excellent from principle? how GROW in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? How shall he have the Heathen for an inheritance and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession? How shall the just man's path shine MORE and MORE unto the perfect day, or the Gospel be like the lightning that cometh out of the East and shineth even unto the West? How shall we ADD to our faith, virtue? to virtue, knowledge? to knowledge, temperance? to temperance, patience? to patience, godliness? to godliness, brotherly-kindness? or to brotherly-kindness, charity?—

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The learned and excellent JOSEPH MEDE has an observation too remarkable not to be transcribed here. It occurs in his admirable Book on Prophecy ; where he would seem to insinuate, that the Protestant Reformed Churches, previous to the final overthrow of Rome Papal, on account of somewhat essentially wrong in their Constitution, shall be overtaken by some signal token of divine displeasure, some heavy punishment from the Almighty. His words are these, and singularly striking they are ! “ There is A SIN, whereof the whole body of the Reformation is guilty, which nevertheless is accounted no sin ; yet such a one, as I know not whether God ever passed by, without some visible and remarkable Judgment. This seems to call for a scourge, before *Antichrist* shall go down, and that may be, as far as I know, this feared CLADES TESTIUM (Apoc. xi. 7, 8.) I will not name it, because it would be invidious ; and I am not willing to be drawn to say so much for the probability thereof in this case as perhaps I could.”—Now, whatever the worthy Author might precisely have meant by this paragraph, to me it appears, that the accommodating aphorism of considering the world *as it is*, and not as it *ought to be*, fully amounts, in its amplitude and tendency, to a species of criminal delinquency, highly deserving divine chastisement. And why ? because it obtrudes itself in the way of Christ’s gracious and liberal Religion, which respects no nation, climate, kindred or people, above another. In truth, were it not checked and over-ruled by Almighty God, before it should have reached the utmost lengths it might and would go, Jesus Christ’s second coming, *in the glory of his Father with his mighty angels*, should totally be superseded, and Christians look for a *New Heaven* and a *New Earth* in vain. It therefore importantly behoves our Bishops and Church Governors to look to themselves in time, lest, in the end, they shall be found *fighting against God*.—Their superstitious, embarrassing *Addenda* to the pure, plain Gospel of Christ ; *shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, binding heavy burdens, which they themselves will not touch with one of their fingers, and making the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions,*

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cannot but awake the interposition of God against them, some time or another; who assures us, *the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church*; a simple, unaffected Society of loving, forgiving, forbearing, retiring, peaceful, meek and holy men.—But to return.

Mr. LINDSEY's Apology for himself, on resigning his Living in the Church, is extremely pertinent and conclusive throughout; drawn up with excellent sense, temper and judgment: none of his Brethren, of whatever station, can, I think, coolly and deliberately read it, without that sort of mental recollection, that self-analysis which, generally speaking, is the first step towards the discovery of Truth: The serious, impartial, circumspect labour, Mr. LINDSEY has bestowed on his subject, is certainly to an equal degree incumbent on every individual of the Hierarchy, not excepting even his Metropolitan Grace of Canterbury—otherwise they must wilfully hypocrise and prevaricate in the sight of Almighty God, and his beloved Son, whom he has appointed a King in his own Kingdom, and the heir of all things.—What, *will you lie for God*; as Job said to his friends, and as we may justly say to the Members of Establishment? And surely it can be no better than *a lie*, for men to sit down contented, in their desks and pulpits, with their initiatory Subscription to Articles they have never carefully and critically examined. Ten thousand having done it before them, whom, on this *particular* occasion, they repeatedly mention as wiser and better than themselves, will never honourably exculpate them; nor ten thousand times ten thousand be sufficient to justify their conduct, at a certain future day of Retribution. God in his supreme wisdom, has made every one competent to examine and determine for himself; but for himself alone: he has not given any one *two Understandings*, to serve his own and Neighbour's salvation at once.

The sin of obsequiousness and acquiescence among the several orders of the Clergy to one another, is a grievous and aggravated sin, as it withdraws every man's attention and veneration from his own embosomed soul, his spirit, which God designed as a Temple for himself, and would
always

always assuredly inhabit, did he always find it disingaged and unoccupied ; free from the bold contaminating intrusion of his own Creatures ; whom he likewise willed and meant devoutly to take care of their own, and not to leave them vacated, unswept and ungarnished, in order obtrusively to force themselves into those of others. *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of the Living God? The Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are : whosoever defileth this Temple, him will God destroy.*—An awful subject of consideration to those (misnamed our Teachers and Guides) who not only leave their own mental sanctuaries shamefully unattended to, but officiously disturb and disconcert others in the blessed and peaceful possession of theirs.

The capital object in the front of Mr. LINDSEY's objections to the Church of England, it would seem, is *the Doctrine of the Trinity* : a *Being* (if it can be called one) that exists by Act of Parliament and Canon-law, rather than in right of itself, by Nature and Common Sense. But no State whatever, no legislative Power on Earth, whether civil or spiritual, has a right to establish an object of worship for me, or any one : so that the School Dogma of the Trinity is a *felo de se*, an abortion in the first instance. The State may command my personal liberty, my fortune, my life ; but it can never possibly MAKE a God for me, or prescribe *how*, or *when*, or *where* I shall worship him : and for this reason eternally conclusive, because Civil Government cannot make a MIND, the unaudible and invisible object of which GOD is : moreover, the same statute authority that *made* the Trinity and enforced its worship, may destroy both together again when it pleases : so that in this way we have an object of SUPREME adoration no better than a graven or molten image, and every one that falls down and worships it, falls down and worships the work of his own hands, and perpetrates an act of the grossest Idolatry. In the Apostolic Age, and for the first three Centuries, where was the Trinity? It was unbegotten and unborn ; there was no civil Power to give it its form, lineaments, and drapery. CONSTANTINE was the first who gave it legal existence, and an Imperial patent-right to be worshipped. He was

converted from Paganism to Christianity, and, no doubt, could not help thinking it a mighty and considerable stop, at first, to contract the catalogue of his Gods to THREE. —Indeed, before his time, they had a Duality, the Holy Ghost not being then once mentioned.

It was no wonder then that so well informed, conscientious a mind as Mr. LINDSEY's, should have been easily startled and thrown into a state of doubt and perplexity. The wonder should seem rather, instead of one, that we have not a number of Lindseys crowding on us every day; especially as it cannot escape the most common reading, how singularly solicitous, even to a degree of declared jealousy, ALMIGHTY GOD has ever been to preserve the supremacy and immaculateness of Worship to himself: the whole *Old Testament* bears uniform witness to this; and the *New*, being merely a fulfilment of the *Old*, from beginning to end, seconds and corroborates this witness, that primary divine truth.

The first of all considerations, is the BEING of a God; and the first conception of that Being, is UNITY; as an ancient writer well terms it, the *fundamentum fundamentorum*. Once we give up this original and intuitive conception, and suffer ourselves to quibble about *Person*, *Substance*, *Co-equality*, *Unity of Natures*, *Double and Treble Identity*, not to mention other instances of grave folly and learned trifling; we that moment begin to erect a *Pantheon* on Christian ground, and cannot consistently stop, till we give the *Virgin Mary*, and *all Saints*, places of consecration there. All depends on a sort of scholastic Legerdemain which has no end whatever, although its origin is but too apparent—from pride, ignorance and self-idolatry. Once an object loses its centre of gravity, its condition ever after must be that of wandering and aberration, beside deranging and disturbing the oeconomy of all things round it. The Jews of old, by the violence of hands, wanted to make our Saviour a King: modern Christians, quite as extravagant and eccentric in their zeal, would have him constituted the SUPREME GOD in their Calendar; at once annihilating his true, his only Identity, and his Relationship to us, as being SENT of God,

God, *the Messiah*, our Great *High Priest*, and the Inter-nuncio or *Mediator between God and Man*. It is a solecism of the most glaring and monstrous kind, that Jesus Christ should be his own High Priest, which he must be if he is the Supreme God; beside being his own Messenger; at one and the same time the Sender and the Sent.—Had not our Blessed Lord withdrawn himself from the Jews when they wanted coercively to enthrone him, I believe, their feverish heat of devotion would soon have cooled, or perhaps have subsided into the pitiful mockery and derision of Herod's *men of war*: a conduct altogether similar to our own at this day, inasmuch that we reject and set at nought the AUTHORITY of that very Personage whom, in the astonishing exuberance of our folly, we have clothed with INFINITY, and set down on the throne of the ETERNAL FATHER. I speak not at random, or without ample and incontestible proof, as shall immediately appear, after introducing here a remark of the incomparable Lord BACON, expressed with his usual depth and energy, “It were better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of him: for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely; and certainly Superstition is the reproach of the Deity: and as the Contumely is greater towards God, so is the Danger greater towards men. Superstition dismounts all sense, philosophy, natural pity, laws, reputation, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men *.”

The Precepts of our Saviour, independent of his Example, as well as the latter independent of the former, ought ever to engage our special reverence and attention: but when in conjunction they are presented to us, they become supremely irresistible and obligatory. The UNITY of God is one of the first objects to which they are directed, and to establish which they perfectly coincide. Indeed Christ's Mission to our world would have been a mere farce, an imposture, otherwise: for he is continually referring us to a Being superior to himself, who SENT him, who TAUGHT him, *without whom he could do nothing*. Let us first attend to his preceptive Authority.

* Lord Bacon's Works. Vol. iii. pag. 325.

rity. We shall take it even from his reprimand to *Satan*, when he wanted the Saviour of Mankind *to fall down and worship him. Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* This is a simple repetition of the Old Testament Command, when the idea of a Trinity was totally unknown. Satan could quote Scripture as aptly as Christ himself, by which it manifestly appears, he knew our Saviour to be the promised Messiah. *It is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.—Thou believest that there is One God* (says St. James, ii. 19.) *thou doest well: the Devils believe, and tremble.* Instead of trembling, however, how deliberately bold, how arrogantly seductive, Satan's address to our Saviour, when he tempted him! a certain proof he perfectly knew the identity of his Character, and that he was *the Seed of the Woman, which should bruise his Head.* Our Lord supposes Satan well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and rebukes him out of them: this supposition takes away all manner of probability from the notion of his being deceived, in looking upon Christ as the Messiah, instead of his being, indeed, the SUPREME GOD; over and above the absurd idea of Jesus Christ submitting to pass a deception upon Satan, thus actually to become *like the Father of lies* himself, a Deceiver. Beside, to me it appears quite impossible, that Satan could be mistaken here: seeing the very exquisite emphasis of his punishment consists in the vastness of his knowledge, without feeling himself the better or happier for it.

A similar declaration to the above we have in our Saviour's reply to the Lawyer who requested to know what he should do to inherit Eternal Life, Luke x. 25. *et infra. What is written in the Law?* says our Lord, *how readest thou?* The other answers from the Old Testament, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.* What is the answer our Blessed Lord returns? Why, he acknowledges this to be altogether sufficient for Eternal Life, even in the sense which the tempting Lawyer himself conceived it; that is,

in the highest conceptions of the *Divine Unity*; the universal unrefracted belief of the Jews, excluding all equality whatever, much more an equality resident in the person with whom the Lawyer was then conversing, and one, it is plain, he looked upon as a mere suppositious human Character, whom he wanted to tempt and insnare. Our Saviour's reply is this, *THOU HAST ANSWERED RIGHT: THIS DO, AND THOU SHALT LIVE.*—But lest the impugnors of the Deity, as worshipped by the whole Jewish world for more than three thousand years, might take a quibbling advantage of the term *The Lord thy God*, as including all the divine Personalities of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though not expressed; I shall adduce a declaration of our Lord's, where the words, *The only true God*, are restricted to the Father alone. John xvii. 123. *These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to Heaven; Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give Eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him: and THIS is Life Eternal, that they might know thee (the Father) THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ WHOM thou hast sent.* Here the Father, singly and abstractedly, is declared by his own Son, *The only true God*, and Jesus Christ his Messenger, whom he has sent. As this text is to the last degree conclusive, and hangs with the dead weight of a mill-stone round the necks of our orthodox Litanic worshippers of Three Supreme hearers of prayer; they have laboured with infinite drudgery to explain it away. Particularly Dr. WALLIS, in his three Sermons on the Trinity, preached to the University of Oxford, has, by transposing words, arbitrarily and ridiculously laid a typographical foundation for banishing the idea of One God out of the universe altogether. By a similar lawless liberty I might transpose the order of the words as they occur in the First Commandment, and injoin Polytheism, instead of the chaste worship of the Father, *in spirit and in truth*. Instead of, *Thou shalt have no other Gods beside me*, I might say, *Thou shalt have no me beside other Gods*. My transposition is as legitimate as that of Dr. Wallis. Alas! alas! that a learned Doctor, before a learned University, a Professor of Geometry too, should have played with words in a manner

manner below the childish foolery of a school-boy ! For what purpose ? to confound and unsettle our notions of the *One only true God*, the Father, whom we are desired to worship *in spirit and in truth*, i. e. without foppery and equivocation, in order to recognize **THREE FALSE GODS**, whom he would artfully conceal under the baptismal covering of Three **PERSONALITIES**, or Three **SOMEWHAT'S**†.

In confirmation of what has been advanced (did it require any) I might bring two Scriptures before the reader's eye, where our Lord denotes himself **A MAN**, so far from deeming himself God : in the one by direct inference, and in the other plainly by name. Speaking of the Jews, he says, *If I had done among them the works which none other Man did, they had not had sin.* John xv. 24. The opposition or contrast here is between one man and another, because Jesus never could mean to persuade the Jews, that Almighty God could not work greater miracles than he. The other passage however is expressly to our purpose : *But now ye seek to kill me, A MAN that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God.* John viii. 40. Now, we must either conceive our Saviour to have been, when he uttered these words, a smatterer in logics, a verbal critic, a mere scholiast, or we must take him at his word, and believe him *a Man*. Indeed, he could not be any thing else, with regard to the world around him, than *a Man*. He was conceived of a woman—he was brought forth naked and helpless, but for his Mother's care, who wrapt him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger—he passed in the ordinary way through the successive stages of Infancy—Childhood—Adolescence—Manhood—he ate—drank—slept—became weary and faint through fatigue—suffered pain—anxiety—grief—sorrow—regret—trouble—affliction—he wept—sighed—groaned.—All these are the palpable specific acts of a *Man*, and could not have been effected by any being but a *Man*. An Angel could not have been capable of them, without being visibly, locally and tangibly embodied ; that is, without being *a Man*. It will be replied, that he had not a mortal Father, like other men. True : neither had Adam, but was *quickened and made a living*
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† See the Sermons above mentioned.

soul by the breath of the Almighty. However, therefore, Jesus Christ was conceived of and beheld by the world of spirits; to the Jews he was properly and essentially *a Man*: *Homines erant, non dii*—An intellectual agent or spiritual being, occupying that peculiar organized frame, called the human body, *is a Man*. The spirit of *Moses*, the spirit of *Elias*, the spirit of *Locke*, the spirit of *Newton*, found habitation and room enough in a human body, as well as the pedant in Hierocles, who carried a brick about with him in his pocket, as a specimen of the house he intended disposing of; or the simple rustic who wanted to catch the sun he saw dancing in a pool of water. Notwithstanding I consider and call Jesus Christ *a Man*, I take him to be the same spirit in human habiliment, that conversed with *Abram*, and wrestled with *Jacob*. Moreover I have so high an admiration of *the human form divine*, that methinks, any spiritual Being whatsoever, inferior to the SUPREME, might and may find it a fit temporary tenement or *domicilium*. Nothing material surely can exceed it in perfection of structure, and beautiful arrangement of parts.

Many pious, but not well-informed Christians, are startled at the notion of Jesus Christ being a mere Man like themselves: but they are mistaken, he was not, although truly and properly *a Man*, a mere man like themselves. He was a great, distinguished and highly favoured Spirit, inhabiting a human body; who before, by the special visibility, or symbolic appearance of *fire, light, and a pillar of smoke*, had, as the *Shechinah* of God, descended and abode on Mount Sinai, during the promulgation of the Law, rested on the mercy-seat; and conducted the Israelites through the Wilderness: whom God thus memorably commissioned as his Angel or Messenger, *Behold, I send an Angel before thee: beware of him, and obey his voice: provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for MY NAME is in him*. Exodus xxiii. 20, 21.—*My Name—the Face of God, his Presence, the Angel of his Presence—the Angel of the Covenant—Jehovah—Elohim—Adonai*—Acting officially by the immediate command of God, he was invested with many of the peculiar names of God likewise; yet still with all
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his high appointments and titles, while he inhabited a human body, he was strictly and literally, A MAN; as much so as PLATO and SOCRATES were men, though not mere men neither, if we take our standard from among the lower or the middle orders of the people.—But nothing need be added to his own words, recorded by his faithful historian John. *Ye seek to kill me, a Man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God.* Whoever disbelieves these words, in their literal meaning, may disbelieve the following also in their literal meaning. *I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me.*

If we turn from the Precepts of our divine Master, to his Example, we shall find him perfectly consistent in this leading particular. He on several important occasions prays to God, and always by the name of *Father, O Father! O righteous Father*; and on one exquisite emergency, *My God! My God!*—Methinks this chaste and simple uniformity of his manner ought for ever to have checked the boldness and impiety of those who were not afraid to introduce two other supreme detached objects of prayer; especially as the beautiful model he has left us strictly coincides with his own personal forms of address; beginning with, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* Our Church Forms, not contented with the unaffected conciseness of Christ's supplications to the Father, have subjoined two other separate independent prayers, to God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; as if, by heaping titles on God, to render him more propitious and favourable; and on Jesus Christ, to exalt him higher than he already is; *set down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, far above all principalities and powers.*—*Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord! have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* This can refer to nothing, with such truth and strength of application, as to the extraordinary procedure of exalting him to equality with his Father the Supreme God, which indeed may justly be styled, *the most wonderful of all wonderful works.* *Why call ye me Lord! Lord! and do not the things which I say?* That is, why give ye me *this* pompous title, and *that* pompous title, yet all the while

while disobey my plainest precepts and commands. The punishment is pointed: **I KNOW YOU NOT; DEPART FROM ME YE WORKERS OF INIQUITY.**

It is very remarkable, that the Righteous are saved, and they know not for what. *When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee.* A striking subject of reprehension and rebuke, to those vapouring, ostentatious Servants of his, who would bespatter him with nominal distinctions and honours; would absolutely stifle him with the superabundance of incense smoking from their idolatrous altars—*Doing those things which they ought not to have done; and leaving undone those things which they ought to have done.* It is a circumstance never to be forgotten, that our Saviour declined and rejected all testimony, all honour from men: which should awfully penetrate those presumptuous, infatuated men, who would stun him with their doxologies, and confound his chaste, meek and holy spirit with their nauseous rant of deifying ascription. Let all such Pharisaical Expectants to be heard for their *much speaking, their long prayers, and vain repetitions* (like the Heathens) attend to *the Wisdom from above: I RECEIVE NOT TESTIMONY FROM MAN*, John v. 34. And at the 41st verse of the same chapter, **I RECEIVE NOT HONOUR OF MEN.** He even reits not his Mission and Character on John the Baptist himself, his harbinger and the preparer of his way, notwithstanding the splendid encomium he passes on him, of *being a burning and a shining light.* John's witness or attestation of his Lord should strike our Equalizers of the Son with the Father dumb with amazement and confusion. The amount of it is this. *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh A MAN, which is preferred before me; for he was before me,* John i. 29, 30. What shall we think then of the temerity and hardness of the Priesthood, who have absolutely annihilated the Identity of the Lamb of God, *the Man* whom John acknowledges to have been before him (in the various Appearance of the Old Testament)

ment) in order to constitute him the Supreme God, as if mankind had not had a Supreme God before!

If we desire to know what witness our Saviour held paramount to John the Baptist's, we need only read John's Gospel, v. 36. *But I have greater witness than that of John: the same works that I do, bear witness of me.*—Bear witness to what? *Atbanasius*, and our theological Speculatists, gravely tell us, to his being, *very God of very God*. But our dear and unaffected Lord never was taught metaphysical division and subdivision. His declaration of himself is the declaration of truth and probability. *The same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*—I know it will be said all this refers only to the human nature of Christ. But a duplicity of nature in our Blessed Lord is a mere clerical conceit and delusion. Two natures in one Person is impossible. Nature in the abstract cannot be considered: you must bring it into connection and individuality with something else, with a given object, or person; such as God, Angel, Man, before you can conceive it, or express your conception. Nature detached from an Agent, is the absence of every thing: now, you cannot possibly say, *great nothing, good nothing, infinite nothing*. St. Paul says, *there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars*: but this glory is no object of thought, till we first contemplate the sun, moon and stars: nor can we by any legality of thought or speech, give the distinctive glory of the three to any one, *in cumulo*, nor pretend to say that the glory of any one is equal to the glory of all. We cannot lawfully say, that the sun is the moon, the moon the stars, or the stars again in rotation the sun.—Our Saviour no where, according to the occasion, talks in the specification of *this, that*, and the *other* nature. And why? because he was no bewildered scholiast, no hypocritical pedant; all whose knowledge is in syllables and words, misplaced and mistimed. Jesus Christ, speaking personally, speaks with propriety and dignity: not with the mutilation and dismemberment of our spiritual anatomists, using the term, *half of himself*, or the *third part of himself*; but with the totality of nature or substance, *I, Me, Myself, My-own-self*.
—Nothing

—Nothing can be essentially greater or less than itself; no Being whatever greater or less essentially than himself: yet he who asserts and maintains a duplicity of natures in one Agent or Person, asserts and maintains the absurd, monstrous affirmative here: nor would it be advancing one step forward in absurdity to affirm, that the consecrated loaf, at the same time that it is bread, is also literally and truly, the body of Christ. A conjunction of natures in essences material, is not a greater extravagance, than a conjunction of natures in essences intellectual: Consubstantiation, therefore, on the very face of it, should shock, should confound us no less than TRANSUBSTANTIATION itself.—Indeed, the same CHURCH (built upon *seven hills*, instead of the rock of ages) that legitimates the one, legitimates the other; and they are both of apiece with her *Supremacy* and *Infallibility*. It may be observed here, that the same Divine Person who says, *My Father and I are one*, says also, *My Father is greater than I*. The first must undoubtedly be referred to *Will*, and the latter to *Being*: for in *Will*, no one could be greater than our Lord; who voluntarily underwent inconceivable hardships and struggles, and at last submitted to death itself, in obedience to his Father, and from the most generous affection to the human species. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*. Jesus Christ, in the most unexampled sense, was this truly blessed, benevolent, disinterested MAN.

But here a difficulty, which many people reckon unfurmountable, occurs. If Christ was really a *Man*, how does it happen that in some places of the New Testament he is styled God. Thomas exclaims, *My Lord!* and *my God!* It might be a sufficient answer to this to observe, that our Lord never styles himself God, and Thomas might be supposed to have spoken *ex abundanti*, from a sudden enraptured emotion of surprize. The highest title, as already observed, our Saviour gives himself, is, the Son of God; and he expressly tells the Jews, that it was nothing extraordinary he should assume this title of filial relation, when in the Old Testament, those to whom the word of God came, those who had authority

rity to declare the mind of God, were styled *Gods* themselves. *I have said, ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.* Psal. lxxxii. In the first verse of this Psalm, *God is said to judge among the Gods.*—God is a term applicable to a general class of beings, an Appellative, and not a proper name; and is always inseparably connected with sovereignty and dominion: in this sense Princes and Legislators are Gods, according to the above texts. Hence likewise, the dignity and pre-eminence of the title must always depend on the Being, Person or Agent, who exercises a greater or less degree of sovereign authority, even from inferior Rulers to the Supreme God himself. Thus Moses is styled a God to Aaron, or instead of God. *And thou shalt be to him instead of God.* Exod. iv. 16. Moses is likewise, by the Lord God himself, constituted and named a God to Pharaoh. *And the Lord said unto Moses, see, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh.* Exod. vii. 1. We need not be at all surprised then that *Jesus Christ* has the appellative of God in some places, when Persons below him in character and eminence have had it bestowed on them even by God himself. Being appointed the heir of all things, and all spiritual dominion and adjudication being put into his hands, he is in the most super-transcendent sense of delegation under the Almighty Father, intitled to the epithet God: and as such intitled also to every degree of deferential duty and obediential respect, short of Supreme.—If it should be called worship, I have no manner of objection, as this appellation, without some appropriate term to specify and fix its meaning, is by no means offensive, or participant of idolatry. When worship is mentioned in reference to *the One only true God*, it becomes untransferable and unalienable: when subordinate Beings are its objects, we must consider it as of a higher and lower style, agreeable to the order and dignity of each respectively who claims it. All spiritual beings whatever (among whom Man is to be included) in proportion to their measure of Virtue, Goodness, Moral Truth and Excellence, have a just and indispensable demand upon us of glory, honour and admiration. It is impossible it should be otherwise: the one attracts the other with the never-varying force of magnetism.

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This glory, honour and admiration, in the highest absolute instance, form the peculiar sovereign worship of the Deity ; in the highest *intermediate* degree, the Worship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God ; and in the last intellectual remove, the worship of acknowledged human greatness, or extraordinary merit. Words seduce us from the consideration of things ; and from sense and sentiment mere articulated sounds. Hence, the term God, and the term worship, applied to Jesus Christ, which we several times find in Scripture, has, for a series of Centuries, led mankind into the incongruous and unwarrantable notion, that Jesus Christ is actually the Supreme Being ; without pausing soberly to consider, that the very same terms, God and Worship, have been applied not only to Angels, but to Men likewise. With regard to the reality of the former, Inspiration has furnished us already with sufficient proof : with regard to the latter, two instances from the same divine source may suffice ; only let it be added in this place, that Almighty God is often, in the Old Testament, styled pre-eminently *God of Gods*, and *Lord of Lords* : a direct confirmation that they regard government and dominion, and are not proper personal titles. All Gods, all Lords, without excepting Jesus Christ himself, are from the Father ; but the Father is from none, unoriginate and self-existent : on account of Christ being his Son, he has the designation of Father ; but he is not named God from any derivative analogy of this kind, although Jesus Christ the Son certainly is. This is a capital discrimination of being and character which ought never to be forgotten, as all perplexity and confusion immediately give way to it : God could not be the Father, without the Son ; and the Son could not be God without the Father.—The first instance of subordinate worship I would produce is that of a Servant to his Master, in an act of supplication mentioned in Matthew. *The Servant therefore fell down and WORSHIPPED him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all.* The second occurs, 1 Chronicles, xxix. 20. *And all the Congregation bowed their heads and WORSHIPPED the Lord and the King.* Were these insufficient other instances might be brought to confirm them ; particularly from 2 Sam. ix. 6. *Now when Mephibosheth came unto David,*

David, he fell on his face and did reverence: and David said unto him, fear not (the very language of God) for I will surely show thee kindness: and he (Mephibosheth) bowed himself and said, what is thy Servant that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?—Or this from 2 Sam. xix. 18. And Shimei fell down before the King, and said, let not my Lord impute iniquity unto me: for thy Servant knoweth that he hath sinned. This is a manner of address and confession often used to the Almighty himself.

From the whole it undeniably appears, that there is and can be but *One only true God*; and that to discriminate him by *Personalities*, or any other process of artificial distinction, is to divide his identity, and render collaterally dependent is self-existing Being.—True; we are enjoined to honour the Son even as we honour the Father. But how much does this imply? surely not honour in the primary superlative sense; for in this sense God will never give *his glory to another*; but that we should honour the Son on account of honouring the Father, or because he has commanded us or made it our duty to do so. The very reason of the honour circumscribes the degree of it. When we are commanded to honour and worship the Deity, we are commanded in the first person of authority. *Ye shall have no other Gods beside me.* No other second Being enjoins it for him, by ordaining, that men should *honour the Father, even as they honour*—a Somewhat else. A parallel text of Scripture will serve to throw a full light on this explication. Matthew v. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect EVEN AS your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* Doubtless, the term, *even as*, here must be restricted to a very subordinate sense, and can only mean, seeing that, or considering that, your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. If we honestly suffer ourselves to be guided by the latter Scripture, the former can never lead us astray, as it has led thousands, who seldom give any attention to the grand Biblical precept, to *compare spiritual things with spiritual*; the perverse neglect of which has been the source of infinite error, by throwing men of the gravitating centre of TRUTH, to lay hold on FALSEHOOD; whirled

whirled round in the vortices of metaphysical *quiddities* and *quoddities*.

The singular Case of Mr. LINDSEY naturally gave rise to the foregoing succinct disquisition into the Doctrine of the Trinity. His view of it, in self-justification, is striking and satisfactory; yet, perhaps, some readers will not be displeased to see it in a somewhat new or additional light; especially, as it coincides with the professed intentions of the present writer, to detect and expose all the works of *Priestcraft* and *Superstition*.—It is no wonder our national Clergy consider it as so fundamental a tenet, and are so obstinately reluctant to give it up, seeing that a variety of other scholastic, orthodox Dogmas subsist by the breath of this Platonic, this Popish Idol: *Adamic imputation of guilt—the Implacability of the Deity in and of himself—the infinite demerit of sin—the arbitrary sovereignty of Free Grace—the inefficacy of personal Righteousness, and the indispensable necessity of Imputed—*with other high Calvinistical absurdities and extravagances; binding heavy burdens, and shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; the mere technical, unessential Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; teaching for *Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; and making the *Commandments of God of none effect by their traditions*.—With respect to every one of them, I would exclaim, DELEND A EST CARTHAGO.—They must all assuredly be destroyed, before the Established Church can regain her *first love*; as they are every one of them inconsistent with the knowledge of *the Father, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent*; that immaculate, comprehensive knowledge which *alone* is Eternal Life. This knowledge the Evangelist and Apostle John has set in the most chaste and concise point of view. *Beloved, let us love one another; for Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.* 1 John iv. 7, 8. This at once brings Religion to its divine plainness, unity and unaffected simplicity; makes it an object of the Heart, and not of the Head; an object of Sentiment, not of Articular Faith; an object of devout holy feeling, and not of periodic, artificial rehearsal: by which the majesty,

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pathos, sententious purity, and luminous perceptibility of Truth, are broken down into the fragments of speech, into the sonorous inanity of pronunciation: a more than Angel's undiscrivable powers of elocution, suffered to die away among the cold senseless echoes of dead walls!

I never read the 11th chapter of the Revelations, but I turn my eyes to *North and South Britain*, to find out the TWO WITNESSES there so strikingly described: if they do not refer to the national Establishments of these two latitudes, I believe, it will be extremely difficult to find out any objects of reference now subsisting. The Apocalyptic number is *two*; the great leading Protestant Reformed Churches are *two* likewise: in many respects they may be said to amount to Witnesses of the Truth, yet to be so far vitiated and corrupted likewise as to infer the calamitous judgment denounced against them by St. John. The judgment however is not to be eternal in its consequences: the two Witnesses clothed in sackcloth, after a certain period, shall be quickened, we are assured, *by the spirit of life from God, shall ascend up to Heaven in a cloud, and their enemies behold them.* Our two most excellent writers on Prophecy, JOSEPH MEDE and Sir ISAAC NEWTON, seem particularly to point out these two Witnesses AMONG OURSELVES. Their punishment is recited as follows, in the usual strong figurative painting of Prophecy. *The Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless-pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.* That situation to which they reduced themselves, by confederating with the powers of this world, the powers of darkness; giving an unrestrained indulgence to ambition, the love of riches, and the love of pleasure, naturally and unavoidably must end in that sort of ruin implied by the Beast ascending out of the bottomless-pit, and making war against them.—*And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city.* In the state of misery and destruction into which they voluntarily and obstinately brought themselves, they shall disgracefully remain for some time; exposed, in the most conspicuous places, to the scorn, contempt and derision of the world.—*And they of the People, and kindred, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half*

half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell on the Earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another: BECAUSE THESE TWO PROPHETS TORMENTED THEM THAT DWELT ON THE EARTH. Those numerous Societies of Fellow-Christians, on whom these two Witnesses (*Churches*) exercised the most wanton tyranny and unwarrantable severities, all implied by the term *tormented*, shall rejoice over their disgrace and overthrow: shall lift up their heads with triumph and exaltation, being set at liberty from that detestible state of durance, utterly repugnant to those original rights, that moral independence, bestowed on them by the Creator, and of which they could only be deprived by violence and robbery. The resuscitation of the Witnesses, after having undergone that righteous and exemplary punishment their pride, corruption and secularity merited, the Apostle describes in these words. *And after three days and an half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them: and they heard a great voice from Heaven saying unto them, come up hither: and they ascended up to Heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.* It is remarkable, that before this scene of glorious exaltation takes effect, they are represented as being reintegrated from an absolute state of death; which infers their previous condition to have been so generally depraved and degenerated, that nothing short of total extinction could be an adequate remedy for it.

It would argue a consummate degree of divine wisdom in our Established Churches, that have become so eccentric from the great magnetic point of Gospel-purity and excellence, to recollect and examine themselves meekly and humbly, in order to be ascertained in what attitudes of similitude they stand with the two Witnesses or Prophets recorded in the Revelations: or, in the abstract, on the best information to be satisfied, what these precise disqualifications, these characteristic delinquencies amount to in a Church, which at once render her odious and abominable in the sight of God, and deserving such heavy infliction of his judgments.—Certainly, to fix her

standard of moral originality, of explicit merit, *a priori*, that is, in verbal ostentatious rehearsals of her belief to dead walls and empty echoes, or have it bound and folded up in the unconscious leaves of a Prayer-Book, is not the way to stand high in the estimation of that BEING, who ought only to be worshipped *in spirit and in truth*, in a pure heart and virtuous tenor of conduct. The Church, however multitudinous in her orders and ranks of precedence, must stand or fall, as an individual, before her Judge. Now, no individual in private life is accounted virtuous or excellent, merely from his setting it down in his diary, that he *thinks*, that he *conceives*, that he *feels* so and so. No! the world would never be satisfied with this, though quite sufficient to satisfy hypocrisy and self-conceit; and the oftener and more solemnly the declaration is repeated, the less still should it be believed. Nothing but *Actions* can be the criterions of a man's Character, the proof infallible of his speaking, or his loving Truth. The Church has no Personality whatever, other than as reduced to the individuality of her Members, as consisting indefinitely of parts, each part only cognizable by, only accountable for itself.

How should we stare at a friend, a neighbour, a fellow-citizen, stepping up to us and telling us, in the face of the multitude, that, indeed, he looked upon himself as the most excellent, virtuous and accomplished Person in the world, with whom no one ought or had a right to compare his pretensions! A procedure of this kind could no otherwise be accounted for, with our most generous partiality in favour of the vaunting Claimant, than by supposing him in a disordered state of mind, somewhat similar to the state of the body in a jaundice, when the diseased patient acknowledges and contemplates no colour but that of his own skin. The Church is this precise identical Person, so singularly original, so super-transcendantly great in her own idea and declarations of herself: therefore, should she be always considered as actually *non compos mentis*; as under that lunatic infatuation which idiotizes every thing she says, renders an object of forlorn pity every assertion she utters.—Hence the Doctrines established in her Articles and Creeds so unintelligible
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and contradictory! preserving their national fashion and currency! in opposition to Reason and Common Sense, by the mere dint of worldly Authority! that same Authority which once supported the Star-Chamber in all its glory, and the levying of Ship-money in all its iniquity! or in a word, that same Authority which maintains the Pope this day on his throne, and tramples Inspiration, the pure, holy Oracles of God, under the polluted feet of Antichrist!

*Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam populumque fluxit.*

Hence, such unaccountable multitudes of the Clergy and Laity, for a series of generations, have believed, affirmed and professed—*they knew not what*; and to this late disgraceful hour, continue to believe, affirm and profess—*they know not what*. The deliramentary paroxysm commencing at the æra of composing Liturgies and Canons, that is, of one set of wretched mortals forging disqualifications and embarrassments for another, has descended, by a sort of hereditary succession, to the present times. Hence also the disorder subsists so incurable, resisting hitherto the most powerful remedies, the most alexipharmic specifics, that Reason or the Understanding can prescribe; and would seem only susceptible of that imperfect kind of curative treatment which consists in being *hospitallied* up in Canons and Prayer-Books, in the same way as the corporeally insane, the pitiable sons of lunacy and idiotism are confined in cells and dungeons; not narrower, not darker than our Articular and Confessional imprisonments. How perfectly consistent with divine wisdom and impartiality, that such Witnesses as these should be so signally punished as we find them in the Apocalypse! their dead bodies exposed in the public streets, without being suffered to enjoy the common rights of sepulture!—

The verity and specific excellence of the Christian Religion depend solely on the Person and Character of Jesus Christ, who was the ostensible introducer of it into the world. If we mistake or misapprehend these essentially,
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we essentially mistake the Gospel System ; being not less inseparably connected with each other than the tree and its circumference of branches, the sun and its radiations. Should we, in a fit of eccentric wantonness, call a tree the sun, or the sun a tree, to what a degree of decent credit, beyond that due to the fool or the madman, should we be intitled ? Constituting Jesus Christ, SUPREME GOD, as the Church has done, and worshipping him accordingly, is at one temerarious frantic stroke, to annihilate his identity as *the Christ*, annihilate his Mediatorship and Eternal Priesthood : for what even Cleric would be so hardened to the back-bone of Orthodoxy as to assert, that the SUPREME BEING is at once the *Anointer*, and the *Anointed* ?—The offended Majesty of Heaven, and at the same time, the very precise means, the very channel of instrumentality to be reconciled to HIMSELF ?—the sovereign object of Worship, and in the same moment, his own High Priest, to offer, and to render that Worship acceptable ?—A Christian Community, that can roll a bit of bread in their mouth, and soak their palate in a mouthful of wine, as being the VERY body and blood of Jesus Christ, THEIR God, may lustily glut over these extreme absurdities : but with what power of ingurgitation can a *Protestant Reformed Church* sit down seriously and soberly to swallow them, who affects to make so wry a face, and feel so frigorific a thrill of horror run through her veins (moved like the sensitive plant, but not like the sensitive plant, shrinking back) at the thought of swallowing Transubstantiation ? By rolling the first as a sweet morsel under her orthodox tongue ; and nauseating the last, she only exemplifies the smooth-faced, but courageous Hypocrite, that would not for ten thousand worlds take a bribe from your hand, but will allow you to—slip it into his pocket. When she revolted from Popery, she gave up the *Real Presence*, with some other enormities ; because, surely, she was under the necessity of giving up *something*, as a plea or an apology to keep herself in countenance with the world, on her rising rebelliously against her Parent's authority : but she retained many dogmas equally as enormous : at the head of which stands her three distinct self-subsisting PERSONIFICATIONS of one supreme, invisible Jehovah, in order to preserve and
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evince her authority, as a national independent Church : so that she is still actually a Roman Catholic Constitution, with the hypocritical finesse of being reformed, without the integrity and totality of Reformation. In this mutilated style of character also, she absolutely destroys the identity and mission of Christ our Lord and Saviour, as a Personage SENT by God ; RECEIVING all power in Heaven and Earth, and the Spirit without measure from God ; and his not having Life in himself, but to whom it was GIVEN to have Life in himself : beside most shamefully contradicting our Lord's own express words. *Father, glorify me with thine own self with that glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Take these words in any other than the plain natural sense, and you have the following fine pleonism of expression. *Father, glorify thyself with thine own self with that glory which thou hadst with thyself before the world was.*—Can we suppose Inspiration capable of uttering such nonsense? Surely no? How much more equitable to place it where it ought to be placed, to the account of HUMAN AUTHORITY, *sitting as God in the temple of God, and exalting herself above every thing that is called God.*—This therefore is the capital delinquency of the two Apocalyptic Witnesses, the Anglican and Scottish Churches, their totally losing, in the conception of the Supreme God, the individuality and distinct Character of *the Christ*, which is equal to what the Apostle John calls, *Denying that he is come in the flesh*, the sin of Antichrist : for the supreme, invisible Jehovah could no more become flesh, than flesh can at this day become Jehovah, the invisible and supreme. Our Saviour's own words are definitive here. *No man has seen God at any time : ye have neither heard his voice, nor seen his shape.* But Jesus was heard and seen times without number ; not merely respecting his visible, audible manhood, which our Scholiasts will have hypostatically subsisting all the while in the One only unseen Divinity ; but himself, his own self, a spiritual being inhabiting a human body, under different appellations, *Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man.* These different appellations were only meant to diversify the dignity and importance of his Character, not to vary or change his Nature. Properly speaking, he was not the

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Son of Man ; properly speaking, he was not the Son of God : yet oeconomically, figuratively, and adoptively, he was both. Scripture all along has the same virtual reservation in styling him the Son of God, as it hath in styling him the Son of Man : the one is significant and explanatory of the other. So that the Church has no excuse whatever for her habitual Idolatry, as every argument of common sense, common language, and common decency is against her : nor is it any wonder, after having non-identified the Person and Character of our Lord, as Mediator, and High Priest, *i. e.* denied him to be the CHRIST, that she should next disown him as her Head and Governor, as supreme Legislator in his own Kingdom, and traitor-like chuse another in his stead, mortal, fallible, and peccable. She installed *Jesus Christ* the Deity Supreme in her Creeds, Articles, and Litanies, that she might take his place as Mediator between God and Man ; decree Rites and Ceremonies, settle Controversies of Faith, and determine who shall be saved, who damned among the people, with an incomparably higher tone of authority than ever he himself assumed when upon Earth.—How strongly marked with fraud and infamy this conduct ! She gave him a mere nominal, titular distinction, in order feloniously to clothe herself in his substantial authority ! Stripping him naked of his beautiful seamless vestment ; emblematic of his Religion, purity and simplicity, in order to array him, as did the insulting soldiery of old, in the mockery of purple !—No wonder such a Church is given over to a reprobate mind ; that she is become so foully corrupt, vitiated and secularized ; and more and more the loud censure, bitter reproach, sarcastic inuendo, and standing sneer of a sagacious, enlightened, penetrating, emancipated age ! No wonder, her Bishops and Pastors having broken off all connection with Heaven, and *Jesus Christ* ! (now resident there) almost to a man, abandon themselves to the most barefaced ambition and avarice of preferments, sinecures, and worldly gratifications ; kept in countenance by nothing but their numbers, the smiles of Courts and protection of Statesmen ; who only consider and use them as necessary, submissive tools and engines of Government, the

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less virtuous and holy, the more highly considered and caressed by kings and the satellites of kings!

No wonder that Truth, divine Truth lies buried in endless articular jargon, and senseless tautology, like a diamond of the first water and magnitude in a heap of refuse and rubbish, when *Human Authority*, the secular arm directly interposes to prevent us from clearing away *the one* that we may come at *the other*. This is the deepest aggravation of sacerdotal or rather episcopal guilt. Our Church Governors might have been contented, one should think, to wrap up their own single, wretched talents in napkins, and their candles under bushels, without secluding and locking up those of thousands in the same arbitrary and illiberal way.—In divine things they have interchangeably sworn to each other *not* to cultivate, *not* to improve their understanding; *not* to let in any accession of light and knowledge on their minds; and would have every one that comes near them, swear and subscribe to the same purpose. They would even constitute ignorance and barbarism a virtue, so far as such a procedure can do it, in consequence of the merit they assume, from *not violating their Oaths and Subscriptions*. But in this manner they become Idols and Gods to each other, and worship one another's Infallibility: for the very nature of an adjuration supposes the absolute truth of that which is immediately its object, seeing no one would swear to direct error or imperfection: now, nothing but Inspiration itself can bear the stamp of absolute Truth; so that men, in the instance of swearing and signing their names to Religious Systems, take upon them the virtual identity of the Authors of Revelation, and every Bishop becomes ostensibly Jesus Christ.—A thousand years have beheld this shocking corruption of Christianity and perversion of the Truth; to which that philosophical Divine, and divine Philosopher, Sir Isaac Newton, would seem to allude in the following passage. “As the few and obscure Prophecies concerning Christ's first coming, were for the setting up the Christian Religion, WHICH ALL NATIONS HAVE SINCE CORRUPTED; so the many clear Prophecies concerning the things to be done at Christ's second coming,

coming, are not only for predicting, but also for EFFECTING A RECOVERY OF THE LONG LOST TRUTH*."

That a Church should continue to realize daily the character of a Witness adjudged, at a future period, to be cut off on account of unpardonable infidelity and corruption, yet all the while remain unconscious of it, at least, affect to be so, may easily be reconciled to credibility by the following well-known Scriptures. *Nevertheless, among the chief men also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not CONFESS HIM, LEST THEY SHOULD BE PUT OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUE: FOR THEY LOVED THE PRAISE OF MEN MORE THAN THE PRAISE OF GOD*†. Here we have simple belief without positive confession, and the former evidently put under a divine disqualification, by being connected with the praise of Men, in preference of the praise of God. The Church, on this occasion, ought to be covered with blushes, as her whole Religion consists in systematic acts of belief, ostentatiously recorded in her Creeds and Articles; which are ordered to be repeated, at particular seasons, as part of the Worship of Almighty God, without deviating from one sentence, phrase, or syllable!—sentiment thus, by a preposterous lifeless license, made subservient to words, not words to sentiment!—But with all this foppery and mechanism of belief, the Church habitually neglects that Confession of *Jesus Christ*, which only admits the praise of God to be of the highest consideration. The Jews were cut off, as a nation and people, for not confessing Jesus to be the Christ: modern Established Christians, the wild ingrafted branch, not the natural stock, cannot surely flatter themselves with a milder or less overwhelming fate, in so far as they resemble that obstinate, incredulous, bigotted, superstitious, and vain-glorious People. No! The Apocalyptic *Clades Testium* seems evidently to await them, as a most equitable punishment, for not knowing the time of their visitation, for not improving their astonishing means of knowledge, privileges and opportunities.—With respect to so
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* Sir Isaac Newton on the Prophecies, page 251.

† John xii. 42, 43.

degenerate and backsliding a Church, who would not burst forth in the following Old Testament exclamation ! OH MY SOUL, COME THOU NOT INTO THEIR SECRET ! UNTO THEIR ASSEMBLY, MINE HONOUR, BE THOU NOT UNITED !—Others may theoretically utter this apostrophe of the excellent Patriarch, and feel the energy of it sink no deeper than lingual sensibility ; but such men, such divine Philosophers as Mr. LINDSEY are not contented with this : they would adopt it as the leading vital principle of practice, as a *lamp to their feet*, and a *light to their path* ; notwithstanding, in doing so, they formally relinquish some of the highest gratifications and pleasures of this life. This spirited exertion of self-denial, while it may expose them to the unhallowed sneer of the mercenary and worldly-minded, as void of true sentiment as genuine Christianity, will serve to sanctify their memories to the latest posterity, while all remembrance of the unworthy sneerer shall be buried with himself in the unremarked grave of oblivion and rottenness. —It is to the last degree astonishing, that so superior an instance of moral excellence and virtuous self-denial, upon being mentioned in the House of Commons, should have passed under the review of that *once* august Assembly with a dry affected sneer tacked to it, rather than admiration. It serves with too much melancholy reason to realize the apprehensions of many wise, discerning men, that manly Virtue and generous Public Spirit exist rather in effigy than reality among us : like the languid gildings of light, after the Sun hath sunk beneath the horizon, skirting the edges of black and watery clouds. A certain Member, better known than trusted, on account of the appendages to his name of the *beautiful* and *sublime*, as a contrary idea to the Dissenters Petition for relief, and in the face of such weighty discontents as that exhibited by Mr. Lindsey, declared, he would always wish to see one GRAND RELIGION Established. According to this easy accommodating Senator, in case the Protestant Reformation should fail, the Religion of Rome, Constantinople, Peking, or Indostan, would still be in petto to fill up *his* leading conception of GRAND. Why did he not, in a happy moment of ingenuity, add the monosyllable *grand* to the beautiful and sublime ?—We should then have had
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one of the most brilliant triplets in any language, euphonic and bewitching to the last degree! He should then have had no rival upon Earth: for ought we to acknowledge HIM a rival, whose uncourtly, unpolished genius would only evince a bias to the *Beautiful and Sublime of CHARACTER*?—No State can subsist without Religion; but when it has lost private Virtue, the disinterested love of common freedom and common privileges, and would make up for this essential loss, by a rigid mechanical attachment to a Religious Establishment, to the shadow instead of the substance; that state has passed her grand climacteric; is become consumptive in some primary organ of vitality, and should seem to have only a very few sickly, listless stages to languish through, before she break to pieces in universal dissolution.—To predicate this of Britain would be deemed, I make no doubt, the wildest reverie of a gloomy imagination, the utmost extravagance of apprehensive enthusiasm. What then? It is by no means less likely to be true, because the current popular spirit of the times might thus conceive of it. In asserting this, I have a considerable authority to support me. "*Indeed almost all people,*" says Dr. TUCKER, in his Remarks on the Conduct of the Americans, "are apt at first to startle at bold truths: but it is observable, that in proportion as they grow familiarized to them, and can see and consider them from different points of view, their fears subside, and they become reconciled by degrees." This is certainly just; but it may be extended to a latitude far beyond the Doctor's sense of things, considering him as a public teacher in a circumscribed stationary Church. This ultimate judgment formed by the ingenious Dean of Gloucester with respect to Great Britain and her Colonies is, That the former should entirely separate from the latter, as wanting that degree of dutiful obsequiousness and fiducial conformity, which are the very first requisites of an unbroken permanent union.—Were a certain national highly-endowed Church, for want of this same dutiful obsequiousness and fiducial conformity to her PROTOTYPE, recompensed according to her desert, a total separation and cutting-off should immediately ensue.—What then should become of such men as the Dean, who are so happy in pointing out the expedience of
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national and provincial disannexion?—Reduced to a forlorn condition, deprived of ample salaries and sinecures, which of them could adopt St. Paul's words so replete with personal felicitation! *I have preached to you the Gospel of Christ freely: when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: in all things I have kept myself free from being burdensome to you, and so will I keep myself.* 2 Corinth. xi. 7, 9.

How melancholy the reflection! Our Established Clergy, many of them, write rationally, ingenuously and critically on every subject of learned and curious enquiry, but Divinity, the very subject in which it should be their business and their ambition more particularly to excel, as no subject, when taken out of the bigot's and enthusiast's hands, would seem more susceptible of sublime research, and momentous discovery! But Creeds and Articles stand impassably in the way, like awkward mounds of barren sand, preventing the salubrious overflowings of the Nile on the fine genial soil of the vallies below. An earthquake, a volcano must swallow these up, by permission from Almighty God, before vegetation can go forward, or our store-houses be filled with autumnal plenty: the ordinary dashings of the wave, the crumbling of time, the ventilations of the winds, will not do.—Philosophical Truth, in these happy auspicious isles, Mathematical Truth, Scientific Truth, Jurisprudential Truth, Agricultural Truth, Commercial Truth, Literary Truth, flourish among us daily, bask in the still brightening sunshine of improvement and popularity: but Divine Truth, Theological Science, in the hands of our incorporated Clergy, would seem altogether ashamed to shew its face, running with every mole into its hillock, with every snail into its shell!—If we derive our information from the Clergy, we shall conceive the God of Creation, and the God of Christianity, to be two distinct repugnant Beings; the one delighting to be known by the most luminous and splendid manifestations; the other as assiduously affecting to lie concealed under the Monk's doublet or Friar's mantle.—But what is the real well-known fact? It is this. The Clergy themselves are in the above predicament: *Loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*

evil. As a systematic body, all their deeds are evil, from his magnificent Right Reverence, an Archbishop, to his simple powdered Reverence the Curate. If to be unlike Jesus Christ, in every emphatical case, the living vapouring opposites of his blessed Example and Precepts, be *indeed* evil, *THEY* are totally evil, and that continually. No wonder, therefore, their doctrinal conceptions of Christianity, nay their very conceptions of God himself, in his infinite nature and moral perfections, should be so grossly obscure, embarrassed, contradictory, and so affronting to the Human Understanding; by which alone we can know or worship the Supreme Being beyond the beasts of the field, or the fowls of the Air. Our Saviour and one of his Apostles very effectually accounts for the blunders and misapprehensions of our Clergy. *If a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him,* John xi. 10. *If any man love the world, or the things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father,* 1 John, ii. 15, 16.—Our divine Lord also makes Eternal life consist in the KNOWLEDGE of God and of Himself. *And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,* John xvii. 3. But this Knowledge our Clergy have taken into their own keeping, have thrown into the wretched durance of Creeds, Articles and Confessions: which virtually is the same unparalleled act as an attempt to take OUR GOD from us altogether, or leave us in no better a condition than that of the Egyptians in old times, who worshipped serpents, baboons, leeks and onions.

To worship God without knowing him, *i. e.* without knowing what it is we worship, should seem the same thing as to conceive of the sun, and admire the glory of his light with our eyes shut. The rational existence and moral nature of the Deity are discoverable to a certain degree by the eye of the Mind, as the existence and nature of external objects or the visible Creation are discoverable by the eye of the body: at a certain *ne plus ultra* point our index of investigation stands, and unavoidably must stand, till we put on a renovated form of being,

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being, and become endowed with a new series of perceptions. The same argument or process of reasoning that forbids the progress of our enquiry with reference to the one, ought as authoritatively to forbid it with reference to the other ; that is, in direct English, men should traverse this earth on which we dwell with their eyes shut or blindfolded, for the same reason precisely that they subscribe the XXXIX Articles, or the Westminster Confession: so that our Bishops and Doctors are not only blind themselves, but are the ostensible leaders of the blind, and surely the consequence is both to be expected and lamented, viz. *that both shall fall into the ditch.*—Hence our Scholars, Philosophers, and Geniuses, when they accept of stalls and mitres, may with the utmost propriety be said to *dwindle* into Dignitaries and Bishops! thenceforward we behold an embargo laid on the exercise of their nobler faculties, respecting that sublime spirit of liberal research, which in the grand result might lead us up to the throne of omniscience, and seat us at the right hand of Divine Majesty; but which, by being damped and restrained, directly tends to furnish us with nothing better than the leatheren pinion of the bat, which only shades and darkness inspire with motion; or involve us in the midge's contracted circle, unprogressively in action under some arcade's sun-darkening foliage! To what is a **WARBURTON**, a **LOWTHE** now sunk?—to a mitre! To what do our **TUCKERS**, our **HURDS** aspire to lower themselves, already seated in Fame's noblest Temple?—to a mitre!—*Sic transit gloria mundi!*

A comparison, obviously occurring here, would seem to reflect but little esteem on the Clergy. All our public associations, the Royal Society, the Society of Arts, nay every municipal Corporation among us, have singularly the advantage of our Religious Corporations. The former meet and do business with the noble and excellent spirit of improvement; of extending their lines of knowledge and usefulness; munificently rewarding the ingenious sons of investigation and discovery: the latter (blush, blush, ye Bishops and Church Governors) absolutely meet in their Convocations and Assemblies (happily the former has not met for half a Century) to check and damp
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the energy and progress of godlike knowledge ; lay positive restraints on Human Understanding, that only ray of Divinity in our lower world, and authoritatively forbid the Soul of man to exercise its powers ; that is, to exist, for while it exists it *must* exercise its powers. Nor are our Religious Corporations contented even with so much gross insult, presumption and impiety, as the above amounts to. Their prohibitions have penalties and punishments annexed to them ; their commands, curses and imprecations : a mode of conduct infinitely criminal and odious in the sight of Almighty God ; who has all along peremptorily declared his extreme jealousy of any of his Creatures taking the reins of Spiritual Government into their hands : of presuming to have any accessibility to the Human Soul ; much more to antedate the *Last General Judgment*, by arraigning and judicially trying its ideas, perceptions and feelings, and punishing it for supposed instances of delinquency. The Son of God himself, the first originated Being in Creation, *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person*, to render, if any thing can do it, our law-giving, mind-prejudging Clergy, eternally dumb, pretended not to any power or authority of judging mankind when upon Earth. His own divine words attest it in the strongest manner, which if a Bishop can read, without throwing his mitre and his rochet in the dust, he must be the very person thus pointed at by St. John. *If any man love the world, or the things that are in the world, the Love of the Father is not in him.* These are our Lord and Master's words, which every one should carry about with him in golden capitals, and be ready to repeat, with the utterance of thunder, to every clerical tyrant who presumes to preside in a spiritual Court, to call his fellow-creatures to account ; and in cases of not being heard, *to shake off the dust of his feet as a testimony against him.* IF ANY MAN HEAR MY WORDS AND BELIEVE NOT, I JUDGE HIM NOT : FOR I CAME NOT TO JUDGE THE WORLD, BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD. HE THAT REJECTETH ME, AND RECEIVETH NOT MY WORDS, HATH ONE THAT JUDGETH HIM : THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN, THE SAME SHALL JUDGE HIM IN THE LAST DAY. *John* xii. 47, 48.

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It is one of the most disgraceful phenominons of the present age, in many respects so enlightened and improved, that a set of learned, many of them ingenious men, by whom I mean the bench of Bishops, should subsist among us as the systematic declared Patrons of Superstition, mystery, ignorance, and anti-reformation: we must believe it, because we see it, but without seeing it, we could not have believed it.—Our Saviour thus addresses himself to his Disciples, *Ye are the light of the world: a city that is set on a hill, cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but in a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.* But how shall we design the bench of bishops, our Right Reverend and Most Reverend Descendants of our Lord and his Apostles? The lights of the world reversed: instead of a city set on a hill which cannot be hid, mere Indian wig-wams, Icelandic subterranean huts not to be seen: candles put under a bushel, emitting no one ray of light, instead of being placed in candlesticks, affording unceasing radiance equally to all around.—Satan, we are assured, sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light. Surely their Reverend Lordships, if they have any decorum of character at all remaining, ought not to suffer the father of lies, the father of mischief, to carry off the merit of this singular elogium: they should rather make it their assiduous study for once to support the credit of their Bibles in the following remark, *That the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.*

In fact, a late determination of the Right Reverend Bench, upon being particularly applied to, *not* to interest themselves in relieving non-conformists under legal oppression; in setting about in earnest to reform their own constitution; should seem to deserve the heaviest lash of Satire, instead of being tickled with the bare quill of ridicule.—How the ostensible Guardians of Christianity can, perfectly taciturn and unconcerned, behold what they are pleased to style the best Establishment of it in the world, exposed daily to the justest censure and the

most important animadversion, is a circumstance truly astonishing and inexplicable, unless we are at liberty to account for their conduct in the same way that Paul long ago accounted for *Demas having forsaken him, because he loved this present world*. Moreover, how our Bishops can look at and contemplate each other on their senatorial bench, in order to advance and extend the business and improvement of the Body Politic, with which, as the servants of God, they have no manner of concern; yet all the while remain obdurately remiss and inattentive with regard to spiritual matters, their proper characteristic employment, *i. e.* Religious Liberty, or the extension of Religious Knowledge, let those explain that deal in master-secrets, in the mysteries of sacerdotal polity: the incumbent cloud is too deep, too heavy, for me to dispel.—

Very lately, a Right Reverend Prelate (Bishop of Carlisle) writing on the often-agitated topic of Subscription to human Articles of Faith with uncommon liberality and precision, seems to have caught the ardent, the divine flame of CLARKE and HOADLY, those most excellent writers in the generous cause of moral freedom and original Christianity.—But, alas! when the worthy Prelate draws near the point to which his spirited labours obviously and naturally verge, that is, the point of *farther Reformation*, his Lordship stops short, and with a passive indolence of Spirit, seems resolved to wait till Providence shall co-operate more effectually to ripen and push forward the noble design. But how would he have Providence interpose? Miraculously by sending Jesus Christ a second time to our world, in order, *propria persona*, to drive our Bishops off their bench, with a scourge of Cords, as he heretofore drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple? or does he look on himself and his dignified Brethren in no better a condition than that of diseased lepers, lying along the pool of Bethesda, unable to step in and be cleansed, till some man push them in?—How has his Lordship's independence of sentiment and nobleness of thinking abandoned him here?—Does his Lordship imagine a Miracle necessary for a man to worship God *in spirit and in truth*?—*necessary not to say long prayers?*—
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necessary *not to use vain repetitions like the Heathen?* a Miracle necessary for a man to *take the beam out of his own eye* before he *spy the mote in his neighbour's?* necessary to *cleanse the inside of the cup and platter?*—What, is a Miracle necessary to turn a Bishop out of Inspiration's usurped chair, out of his ecclesiastical judgment-seat, when all the world knows he has the absolute loco-motive ability, if he has but the Conscience, to rise up and quit it of himself?—Is a Miracle necessary to authorize a man in restoring his neighbour the most valuable part of his property, which he had robbed him of by high-handed violence, or withheld from him by the unsanctified tenure of popular prejudice and long possession?—Does it require a Miracle for a Bishop perseveringly to assert and defend the eternal laws of Truth and equity, or to withdraw his countenance and protection from error, falsehood and injustice, supposing his best wishes, his best endeavours inefficient, actually to *establish* Truth and Equity?—Is the omnipotent interference of a Miracle requisite to justify a Bishop in honestly and candidly maintaining, in the face of angels and of men, that right is right, and wrong is wrong.—If all these Miracles be really necessary, then shall we need the aid of Miracles in buckling on our shoes, and adjusting our cravats about our necks.—Did our dignitary Churchmen give manly superior proofs of disinterestedness and self-denial, while they thus wrap round them the mantle of indolence, procrastination and anti-meliorating, our respect for them should not die away on our lips as it does, nor languish in the cold recesses of our hearts: but when it is notorious they are hugging their mitres and rapturously surveying their lawn-sleeves, all the time of their backwardness and disinclination to REFORM, what generous Protestant heart can feel, what generous Protestant tongue can express respect for them?—

It is wonderful, and indeed melancholy to think, when our Interest and Duty draw different ways, what flimsy superficial reasoning, what thread-bare apologies, what blind, lame and naked salvo's of conduct, we cause to serve our purpose, in order effectually to preserve *the first*, and at the same time, keep up the appearance of obtem-

perating *the last*. Such a procedure may satisfy our own corrupt, interested spirits; may satisfy persons in similar circumstances with ourselves; may satisfy the inconsiderate, the ignorant, and the credulous: but such a procedure will not, cannot pass with Almighty God, whose irresistible eye penetrates every false outside, every hypocritical exterior; will not, cannot pass, even with wise, discerning, ingenious men.—How much have our Bishops to answer for to their own consciences and at the future judgment-bar of Jesus Christ, who are confessedly the grand ecclesiastical spring of Reformation; yet instead of allowing it to traverse the Kingdom, in one pure, bright, copious tide, they suffer it to glide off laterally into marshes, bogs and dirty stagnating pools, incapable of affording either refreshment or fructification!—How much have they to answer for, both in this and in the world which is to come, for shutting their ears against, and forwardly resisting so many repeated summonses of reformation from Heaven? resisting such divine heralds as CHILLINGWORTH, TILLOTSON, LOCKE, SIR ISAAC NEWTON, CLARKE, HOADLY, CLAYTON, BERKELEY, with many other illustrious Personages of their own Communion†. They have resisted these with an obduracy of attention, an unfeelingness of conscience, which have no example upon record, except among the devoted Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees of old, who resisted the antient Prophets, nay Jesus Christ himself in person, precisely in the same way; as tenacious of their established authority and superstition, as sordidly addicted to their secularities.—Other Heralds, still increasing in number as the exigencies of Christianity increase, are again sounding the immortal call of Reformation in their ears: the Authors of *the free and candid Disquisitions*; the acute and sagacious writer of the *Confessional*; and the animated, masterly opponents of Rutherford, Tottie, Balguy, &c. not to mention those conscientious, disinterested men who have lately altogether relinquished their livelihoods in the Hierarchy, rather than any longer give their countenance to a religious Incorporation, altogether unknown to

† The Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Blackburne, Dr. Dawson, the elegant, pathetic Author of *Letters to the Prelates*, &c.

to Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God. Should another half-century revolve, and see these celestial Messengers also despised, and their summonses rejected; another and yet another race of Prophets shall arise, still more numerous, still more formidable; till God himself, obviously interposing, will not suffer their witness and evidence longer to be rejected, but will awfully exemplify the following words of our Saviour. *Whoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind them to powder.*

Even independent of the above affecting consequences *in futuro*, the present situation of the Established Church should seem to the last degree piteous and forlorn. She cannot possibly make a proselyte without directly acting on the SENSES of mankind, and flying in the face of the Lord's Prayer, where one principal object of our petition is, *not to be led into temptation*: for assuredly, at her first constitution, had the Anglican Church had no lucrative places, sinecures and emoluments to bestow, not even her name, much less her glory, should have descended to the present times: but *where the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together*. Deprive her of Stalls and Mitres, and her other pecuniary props, and you deprive her of life and being. Her's is only golden existence, without the solidity, brightness, permanency and universal currency of gold. Alter the civil constitution of England, let a foreign foe invade its territories, and overthrow its internal government (which God forbid!) the British Church is no more!—expiring on the point of a spear, or blown away into annihilation from the mouth of a cannon!—Money is the breath of her nostrils, and the statute-protection of the Realm, the vital sustaining fluid in her veins. Almighty God, or his Son Jesus Christ, has no more to do with her, either with regard to her preservation or perpetuation, than with any ordinary Corporation of mechanics or handicraftsmen. All the while, totally independent of such local convulsions, such provincial revolutions, as the above, the Church of God, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ should be flourishing in diverse parts of the Earth in prosperity and glory; against which,
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we are assured, *the gates of hell shall never prevail.*—How different the fate of the external visible Church! A revolution originating in the State, and not occupying more than one annual circuit of the sun, would be more than sufficient to entomb all her greatness, and lay her rotting in the dust. To what should *then* amount her divine claim of Ordination?—to the mockery of the breeze passing over the grave-stone avenues of her dead, or lingering in melancholy rustlings among the branches of the rueful cypresses!—Even contemplating her in full auspicious life, all-prosperous and all-glorious, how much worse than non-entity is her existence, inasmuch as she can never add one Conformist, one new member to her communion, without, to use Scripture language, making *his latter state worse than his first!*—while she affects to offer us the Liberty of the Gospel, *the glorious Liberty of the children of God*, with the Bible in one hand, she in reality reduces us to the condition of bondsmen and slaves, with forms of Oaths and Subscription in the other: over and above the unparalleled circumstance of her actually seizing a large proportion of our property, even at the time she is tightening the ligature about our legs.—

Nor is it less the misfortune, than the fault of our systematic Clergy (I speak of them in the aggregate) that although they loudly contend the Scriptures are their charter of Commission and Office, seldom do they think of studying *these Scriptures*, but only so much of them as their Liturgies have CONSECRATED. Hence the guilt of Liturgies and all formulary Compendes of Christianity, being the mixt, garbled, imperfect compositions of wretched fallible men, bound up with the sacred Oracles, the pure word of God. By this bold clerical stratagem, the unthinking part of the world (always the greater number) are led to consider them of equal authority, which, in fact, they are, so far as the Statutes of the Realm can make them. The procedure imperceptibly tends to withdraw our respect and veneration from the divinely-inspired Bible; mankind being too ready to take it for granted the BEST PART of that immaculate Volume has been inserted in our Prayer-Books. It totally differs

differs from particular Sermons, Commentaries, Harmonies, Concordances, &c. where we find large portions of Scripture; because these are never systematically constituted, and licensed by the State, to be especially and statedly used in preference of all others: are never permitted to repose in our Churches, as part of their stationary public service; though they are occasionally dragged in there by our Reverend plagiaries and pilferers, who having no divine furniture themselves for the pulpit, without compunction rob the literary dead of whole sections and chapters.—This mingle-mangle of human and divine, this motly composition of God and Man, set up together and sanctified by usage in our Places of Public Worship, has not only thrown scandal on Reformation, and cold water on its future progress, but is in itself absolute impiety; by imparting to Man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and whose kindred are the reptiles under our feet, that glory and honour only due to God, or, at least, by associating and confounding them ignorantly and arbitrarily together.—As a natural consequence of this you will seldom meet with Bibles in private houses, even of Clergymen themselves: but Prayer-Books, Companions to the Altar, Catechisms, Expositions of Catechisms, &c. &c. these truly Apocryphal, and in many instances, absurd, unintelligible Writings, **THE SCRIPTURES OF THE CLERGY**, you will meet with in abundance on every desk, on every shelf, in every study. So admirably pointed are our Saviour's words! **YE HAVE TAKEN AWAY THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE: YE SHUT UP THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AGAINST MEN: YE MAKE THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITIONS: AND YE TEACH FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.**

I am well aware, many will think that the writer, on the several topics that have fallen under his pen, has dipped that pen too deeply in the caustic of Satire; has made use of too high colouring, too much declamation, too much asperity, too much invective.—The reader has a privilege to think so if he pleases, and the writer a similar one to think otherwise. I write on a general subject,

ject, in behalf of the Christian world at large, with no interested concern whatever about any of its systematic divisions or subdivisions; and I acknowledge submission to no Authority upon Earth, but that of my BIBLE, and the HUMAN UNDERSTANDING: I pay court to no Patron whether Right Reverend or Right Honourable; I solicit no personal countenance or favour; I descend not to private moral characters or domestic history; nor do I glance with an evil, jealous or envious eye, at any one individual whatsoever: therefore it follows as a just consequence, that no one has any right to be my judge, who is pertinaciously attached to a PARTY, to a LEADER, to a CREED. Let the Reader arraign and try me, by the Authority of Reason and of Jesus Christ, and I will with alacrity and confidence submit to stand before his judgment-seat.—I look upon the spiritual empire of the Clergy to be the most despotic, corrupt and dangerous in the world: an empire in its leading and avowed principles destructive of Human Freedom, consequently of Human Happiness, and directly opposed to the Gospel of Peace, the Gospel of our *Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. As such I have opposed it, as such I will oppose it, with eagerness, freedom and energy, so long as I shall be able to wield a pen, or conceive a thought worthy the pen of Honesty and independence. All our state-incorporated, our richly-endowed, legislative-stationed Clergy, I would include in these characteristic words of our Lord. BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS, WHO COME TO YOU IN SHEEPS CLOTHING; BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENING WOLVES. I would take Jesus Christ's universal and kindly-intended hint here, both as my encouragement and my apology. Moreover,

Lædere qui potuit prodesse aliquando valebit;
Vulnera dum fanas, dolor est medicina doloris.

Which may be thus paraphrased in vernacular language:

The caustic thus the Surgeon's hand applies,
The phlegmon kindles, and the blisters rise,
Life's

Life's languid springs and movements to restore,
 And graft health roseate on a partial sore.
 What great important good e'er lack'd its ill,
 To break not Nature's laws but to fulfil?
 The cloud that deep o'erspreads Creation's face,
 Descends in rain and fructifies each place.

The more I revolve the subject in my mind, the more I am convinced that Truth, divine Truth, lies on the opposite side to the Clergy : so that the confederating, monopolizing, imposing spirit of that body must first be destroyed, before we can have access to *the Temple of Truth*, or worship God *in spirit and in truth*. In the mean time, a generous, persevering hardihood of investigation must precede : before which, in the long run, Priestcraft and scholastic mystery, however patronized, however coercively supported, cannot but fall under their own aukward, cumbrous ruins.—Did I need any other than that of the Bible, I might shelter myself under the authority of Dr. LOWTH (now a Right Reverend Bishop) who has this remarkable passage in a Sermon of his preached and published when he was prebendary of Durham. “ Let no one lightly entertain suspicions of any serious proposal for the advancement of religious knowledge ; nor out of unreasonable prejudice, endeavour to obstruct any enquiry that professes to aim at the farther illustration of the great scheme of the Gospel in general, or *the removal of error in any part, in faith, in doctrine, in practice, or in worship. An opinion is not false because it contradicts received notions. But whether true or false, let it be submitted to a fair examination. Truth in the end must be a gainer by it and appear with greater evidence.*” Whether the possession of a mitre has had power to check the liberality of this declaration, as it is confessed Mitres are powerful things, remains a problem which possibly some future critical occasion shall solve. While the Dr. evidently encourages free enquiry, he supposes errors and defects as the proper objects of that enquiry, otherwise his sentiment upon the whole has no meaning. In reality, all establishments should seem made up principally of such errors and defects, being
 entirely

being entirely HUMAN in their constitution and perpetuity: but especially as they in effect destroy the identity of our Saviour's Person, the authority of his Example, and the Divinity of his Character. Jesus Christ himself was literally a DISSENTER—a Dissenter from *such* an Establishment; and so must every one from every national popular Religion, till the end of the world, that would acknowledge him as Master, or tread in his divine footsteps. Nonconformity to superstitious Rites and Ceremonies, to hypocritical Devotion, and ostentatious Worship, began with the public Ministry of our Lord. He himself was the grand Prototypal NONCONFORMIST: his Disciples caught and breathed the same excellent spirit of religious freedom and independence. It descended unimpaired and unpolluted, in its general effect, through many generations, till it was overtaken by CONSTANTINE and his COUNCILS; who restored once more the Old Exhibitory Religion, by rendering the Gospel of Christ merely political and secular; a Constitution which ROME and her numerous national progeny, FRANCE, SPAIN, PORTUGAL, ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, have handed down to the present times. So that PRIESTS of all endowed, mercenary, municipal Religions, have been alike since the beginning of the world; anxious about the preservation of their temporalities, their honours, salaries and sinecures; and, in order to maintain among the people, always too easily, too successfully over-reached, their separate, official importance, no less anxious for certain Doctrines and Superstitious Observances of their own *composing* and *imposing*; which they have all along with an high hand lawlessly interwoven with the purity and simplicity of true Religion, and which to detect and decompound, would require learning and understanding far beyond the common level: whence they have been on all pressing emergencies confidently sure of the popular voice, while the united voice of liberal, ingenious, discerning, disinterested men, has ever been against them. Nor were the Jewish High Priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees, against whom our divine Lord so uniformly inveighed and protested, more passionately anxious in all the above respects, than are our Bishops and Church Governours at this

this day : so perfectly applicable to all Churches invested with worldly riches, distinctions and emoluments, the prohibitory reprimand of the Son of God, MAKE NOT MY FATHER'S HOUSE AN HOUSE OF MERCHANDISE. John ii. 16.

It will, no doubt, be particularly remarked, that the writer has treated *the Bench of Bishops*, with very little respect or veneration : I acknowledge it frankly. As individuals, I honour and esteem the memory of many Bishops *not* in the land of the living, and the characters of *some* now alive ; but as a Body assuming jurisdiction, presiding in courts of trial, judgment and punishment, dictating, restraining, coercing, fining and excommunicating ; I would ever hold them in the utmost contempt and derision, as enemies of human knowledge, respecting the Deity, and avowedly disaffected to the investigation of Religious Truth : but paramount to all, as Intruders into the Temple of God, where Jesus Christ should alone sit unrivalled and supreme ; as daring to enact laws and statutes additional to his, and calling upon the Powers of this world to sanction and enforce these laws, in order to give them fictitious majesty and operation. To me it appears, it would argue a desertion of our allegiance to Jesus Christ, the only Governor and Legislator in his own Kingdom, not to express the utmost indignation at their usurped authority, their over-bearing presumption, restless ambition, secular-mindedness, and hypocritical detail of pretences and plausibilities. I can bring one of their own order, a man of truth and candour, directly affirming the same thing. " If there is one virtue," says he, " more peculiar to the Christian System, as distinct from all others taught by natural Reason, beside loving our enemies, it is that of a contempt of this world and heavenly-mindedness. An Ecclesiastic therefore may write and preach for ever, about the truth and excellence of Christianity ; but if he is known to scrape up many thousands out of the revenues of the Church of Christ, no matter whether it be to establish a name and raise a family, or to leave to wife and kindred ; he will never be able to make any converts to Christianity, or do any good by writings, which

which his own life counteracts so flagrantly: such an Ecclesiastic will be so far from converting unbelievers to Christianity, that *nothing promotes Infidelity, perhaps, so much, as the avarice and selfishness of the superior Clergy.**” These sentiments are free, bold and just. Nor do I think one of our Monthly Critics has exceeded due bounds in the following passage. “Reason and argument have been employed to little purpose: who knows but that wit and satire may produce some good effect? And surely when *Bishops, who call themselves Protestants, are at this time of day, advocates for the continuance of penal laws for the direction of Conscience, they are fair game, and deserve the keenest shafts of every species of wit and ridicule* †.”

Others have tried *their* method: I must try mine. Should it not succeed, the disinterestedness of the intention will serve both as my justification and my reward.—*Est quoddam prodire tenus.*—The combatants that fight under the banners of Christian Liberty, that is, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, may with peculiar felicity adopt the following line from a profane author.

Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.

Men that cannot be gently persuaded into sense, may, perhaps, be downrightly shamed into sense. None will condemn the keenness and acrimony of the satire, but such as *feel* the satire. Those however that feel, ought not to condemn it, seeing they are both the cause of, and the apology for it. Such must change, that is, become what they are not, else satire continue to load her quiver and sharpen the point of her every arrow.—Ten thousand literary sons of soft persuasion, of cool address, have failed, against the minions of spiritual tyranny and corruption: should I also fail, I shall have the satisfaction of failing in good company, over and above being kept in countenance
by

* Advice from a Bishop, in a series of Letters to a young Clergyman. By a *late* excellent and celebrated Bishop of Clogher..

† Monthly Review for March 1774, page 236.

by the well-known adage. *In magnis voluisse sat est.*—I write in the face of Church-men who have formally relinquished their connections with *the Son of God*, by forming an alliance with *the Powers of this world*. Truth can never be justly or happily conceived of by men, whose lives and characters degrade and contravene it ; no more than a beautiful landskip can be represented picturesquely by that pencil which, instead of drawing out the lines of just design, and elegant proportion, should disfigure the back-ground with blots, and blacken it with dashes.—God never yet intrusted an accurate conception of Truth to men that daily prove its inefficacy on their hearts and lives, by breaking the express commands and institutions of the God of Truth. The virtuous, sober, self-denied, merciful, conscientious, candid man, should seem to have the only genuine feeling and perception of Truth in his bosom : all others are counterfeits, however distinguished by the dignitary badge of Establishment, however authenticated by the vellum stamp of civil Authority.—To throw away mildness and gentleness on persons that have *merit* sufficient to intitle them to the contrary, would be to defraud the *gentle* and the *mild* of their natural property. No one can be mild or gentle *meritoriously*, who is not capable of self-defensive sentimental accensions of passion : without this, clemency and mansuétude degenerate into constitutional dryness and insipidity. A milk-soft temperament of this sort, when the excellence and purity of Religion are at stake, consequently every thing dear and valuable to us as Christians, would seem to be *that* so singularly markt and punished in the Revelations, by being *spewed out of the Mouth*.—I confess it, that to establish the universal Empire of the Bible, in its own divine form, Creedless and Confessionless, is my wish, my leading ambition : all the ardour, the energy, the pathos, the enthusiasm, I am master of, if I am master of any, I would lay out on the occasion. “ When our Subject lies near our heart,” says an incomparable Philosopher, “ our language must be animated, or it will be worse than lifeless, it will be affected and hypocritical. Now what subject can lie nearer the heart of a Christian, or a man, than the Existence and Perfections of God, and the
Immortality

Immortality of the Human Soul *?"—The truly memorable and ever to be respected HOADLEY, had he not *looked back when he put his hand to the controversial plow*, by giving way too passively to the self-deceiving humour of a favourite maxim, would have left the British Christian world much nearer a general Reform than, in fact, he did. His high-stationed brethren, when they saw so great and good a man stop short midway in the lucific path of Reformation, not inconsistently concluded, that the necessity of Reforming upon the whole was by no means urgent: therefore, they did not even take the trouble of accompanying him half-way; but rather chose to remain in darkness altogether than, after a few imperfect glances of light, to fall back again into the opaque, and of course find it doubly irksome.

Divines have taken infinite pains (Bishop Butler in particular †) to vindicate *Providence* on the alleged account of not having made Christianity universal, when in truth they themselves, Bishops and Doctors, are the living *established* obstructions and hindrances in its way: in plain English, they would stand forth as the compurgators of Almighty God, with reference to an injurious species of delinquency of which themselves, one and all of them, are guilty.—Surpassingly considerate and generous!—The fact is (and a stubborn fact it is) that God, by his Son and faithful Messenger, *Jesus Christ*, set Christianity a-going in the true genius and channel of universality, by constituting all its members and votaries perfectly equal to the end of the world, that is, judicially unaccountable to each other.—Were it otherwise, tyranny and the vilest despotism might assume and maintain a divine right to become universal: tyrants and despots have often acted with this Satanic sentiment glowing and tumultuating in their bosoms; but as often, like *Lucifer*, have been overthrown and laid prostrate in disgrace. Power lodged absolutely by God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe, in the hands of Mortality,

would

* Dr. Beattie on Truth, page 550.

† See his Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed.

would really be an absurdity of the first magnitude ; infomuch as, by constantly and unavoidably turning out despotic and tyrannical, it would daily and hourly rise up in oppugnance to Himself, his sovereign dominion and supreme administration ; unless he should ever and anon interpose, visibly and supernaturally, to counteract its decrees, and retard its progress ; un-spoke its Phaetonic chariot-wheel, and clip its vulturine pinion : therefore has he, with consummate wisdom and consistence, with no set of men whatever intrusted a resident, jurisdictional power. Temporal sovereignty, or supreme civil government, is no exception to this ; because it flows not from God, but from man ; who, as a free being, can bestow or withdraw it when his own absolute welfare and security require either. Freedom of being was the first divine investiture : the good and evil resulting hence, in the *preservation* of the one and *cure* of the other, depend intermediately upon man.

In Religion, however, matters are far otherwise constituted : at the head of which God himself, and his Son *Jesus Christ*, alone preside ; and under whom all mankind without distinction are arranged in the most unrespeaking sodality and brotherhood. God in Revelation only speaks to us by *Jesus Christ* : these then are the words of the latter. *Call no one Master, no one Father upon Earth ; for one is your Father which is in Heaven, and one is your Master, even Christ ; and all ye are brethren.*—Bishops that can mistake these express and positive injunctions, may likewise mistake their Parliament robes for a *Saviour's* seamless vestment, and their mitres and chariots for his Cross and crown of thorns.—Bishops therefore, contemplating the non-universality of the Gospel, should smite their bosoms, and with a noble unexampled ingenuity, point themselves out to their ill-requited Maker, as the true and only causes of prevention why *that Gospel, the Gospel of his Son, has not been preached unto all the world, as a witness to all nations* : and implore an holy reforming spirit from on high : a spirit of wisdom, meekness, moderation, humility and self-denial.—Churchmen have had Christianity in their hands

hands now upwards of *seventeen hundred years* : but instead of advancing forward, it is daily going backward. Shall we blame God or man ? *Jesus Christ* or the bench of Bishops ?—Tell us ye emblazoned satellites of monarchs, ye twinkling moons stuck in the belt of every enthroned *Jupiter* ; instead of being the humble followers of *the meek and lowly Jesus* : who refused to be a king, nay a private divider of property ; telling his Disciples (to the end of the world) *be had set them an example that they should follow his steps*.

What has prevented the Christian Religion, through a surprising series of *seventeen Centuries*, from becoming universal ? There is a sovereign mistake some where, though a Right Reverend one, in this matter.—Here the shoe pinches : here the nail may be driven to the head.—Why do not the Clergy abandon their General Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries, Kirk-Sessions, Convocations, Bishop's-Courts, Consistories ; where they sit the mockery of their own shadows, and the bugbears of their own voluntarily-inflaved imaginations ; abandon their coaches, chariots, settees and drawing rooms ; in order to render Christianity as diffusive and boundless as, by the following Commission, it would appear, *Jesus Christ* most certainly intended it to be ? *Go and teach ALL nations*, Matt. xviii. 19. *Go ye into ALL the world, and preach the Gospel to EVERY creature*, Mark xvi. 15.—Is England, Scotland and Ireland, *all nations* ? or their inhabitants, *every creature* ?—Does Churchmen's standing in their desks and pulpits, week after week, and year after year, clad in fine linen surplices, and robes of silk, amount to *going and teaching all nations* ?—Is it possible our Reverend and Right Reverend Doctors can imagine, Almighty God will a second time work miracles, by raising up a PETER, a PAUL, a BARNABAS, to preach the Gospel in *Asia*, in *Africa*, in *America* ; lest an established highly-endowed Priesthood, my Lords the Bishops, should be disturbed on their senatorial bench, in their palaces, levee-rooms, sofas and arbours ; figuring with the great and mighty, and feasting with the dissolute and voluptuous ?—perhaps on Sundays and high
festivals,

festivals, condescendingly rehearsing and responding, in Cathedrals, the praises of God and of—MEN!—A simple monarch on a throne, supposing him the object of their addresses, would be tired out and jaded with their fulsome, nauseating, complimentary lip-service; their tedious, disgusting, embarrassed prayers. Is the ear of Almighty God less chaste, less delicate, less exquisitely feeling, than that of a simple monarch?—Things must take a turn from their present forlorn, disgraceful state, or the words of *divine Truth* be falsified, the institutions of *divine Wisdom* overthrown, and the Gospel of *Christ* buried in its own ruins, instead of being *preached unto all the world, as a witness to all nations.*

What should the Hierarchies of *England* and *Scotland* be, deprived of their annual appointments, stipends and sinecures, other or better than a body of *Swiss* or *Hessian* mercenaries dismissed from their pay?—Would Bishops, would Presbyters, continue in their stations one moment, to preach the everlasting Gospel, without their respective fixt salaries, a sort of *living inspiration*, while that of their *Bibles* seems to lie dead?—No, surely: for were they indeed in possession of so glorious and Apostolic a spirit as to persevere in the *former*, and at the same time relinquish the *latter*, we should not find them loitering at home, enjoying to gratification and satiety, the *good things*, the savory *flesh-pots* of three small kingdoms (egregiously small, compared with the four vast Continents of the world) rhyming over and over and over again, in the ear of the Deity, as if difficult or obdurate of hearing, their rotatory forms, and ceremonial flourishes; the very identical *long prayers*, *much speaking*, *vain repetitions*, like the *Heathen*, mentioned and positively condemned by our *Saviour*: but with their staves and sandals travelling into the uttermost parts of the earth, through yet unexplored and un-christianized Indian nations; on so illustrious and divine an embassy, depending for their bread on that over-ruling, all-seeing PROVIDENCE, which *clothes the lillies of the field*, and *feeds the ravens of the wilderness*.—John the Baptist, the first Christian missionary sent from Heaven, *was fed with*
Y
locusts

locusts and wild honey; yet was he a *burning and shining light*: were our modern Reverend Baptists *burning and shining lights*, they should never lack at least, from the bounty of Heaven, their *locusts and wild-honey*.—We *Britons* (happy *Britons*!) have the BIBLE in our possession to instruct us; left as perfect, that is, as plain and perspicuous, as *Jesus Christ* could leave it: but *Indians* (unfortunate *Indians*!) have it not.—Let Clergymen then quit a place where essentially there is little use for them, in order to go where there should seem incomparably more,—The Disciples first preached at *Jerusalem*, and then in all the countries round about: our Clergy have already preached and loitered for ages in Britain; let them then at length gird up their loins, and preach the Gospel of *Christ* to all the kingdoms round about. The labourer, most assuredly, is worthy of his wages: but the wages ought by no means to forego the work.—Expeditions to far distant nations and people should have the effect, perhaps, of hardening and masculinizing their coaxed and delicate constitutions, attenuated and broken down by excessive ease, indolence and luxurious living: therefore, supposing our Ministers of the Gospel regardless of their souls (out of sight being out of mind) let them, in the name of common self-preservation, be at least regardful of their relaxed and enervated bodies.—More seriously.

Bishops and Church Governors have no right whatever to *send* others as missionaries and teachers, to Christianize Indian nations, Heathens and Pagans: the positive command is, for THEMSELVES to go, *preaching repentance and remission of sins among all nations* (Luke xxiv. 47) *Christ*, when he delivered the command, immediately before his ascension into Heaven, knew no distinction of orders, except that *the chiefest should be the servant of all*.—Alas! our far-off ordinational descendants of FISHERMEN, our Parliamentary Fathers in God, instead of being *fishers of men*, would only fish for—loaves and fishes: by no means satisfied, upon *asking bread*, to be remunerated with a *stone*.—A stone let martyrs seek:
the

the spirit of the Hierarchy is not to become, but to
MAKE martyrs.

Our Fathers of the Church themselves decree,
State-slaves in all beside, from *Bibles* free ;
A musty, stale, time-rent, moth-ate antique,
Some strange folks prize from humour, or from
pique.
Bishops *give* rules, but are not *ty'd* by any,
Like the mean mobile crowd, the vulgar many ;
Ty'd not by *Scripture*, a dead-letter boast,
Till breathed upon by BISHOP'S Holy Ghost ;
A dainty smock-fac'd *thing*, in surplice rob'd,
But into soft, plump fat its cheeks conglob'd.
Sometimes in chariot riding, sometimes seen
Bearing the train up of a king or—queen.
Sometimes, in easy gracious dishabille,
Set at my Lady's parties of quadrille.
Sometimes, in mute, mock, puppet-raree-show,
Plac'd on Patrician bench—its nose to blow.
Sometimes, in Sunday's pulpit (wayward elf)
Mutt'ring o'er Gospel-satires—on itself ;
Of't'ner indeed, all powder and perfume,
At Statesman's levee, court-day drawing-room ;
To know, beyond all second-hand averment,
How spread the *Gospel-tidings* of—preferment.—
This courteous, well-bred, leering, simpering *thing*,
Its head all fashion, and its heels all spring ;
Must blow its little breath upon our *Bibles*,
E'er we dare separate plain truth from libels ;
Distinguish yonder sun divinely bright,
Thron'd in meridian majesty of light,
From his resemblance dancing in the pool,
That neither warms nor guides, but charms the fool.—
Hugging this paste-board, wire-strung HOLY GHOST,
Let each his *Bible* use to—sing the roast ;
Its sense departed, and its spirit fled,
To hover round the Apostolic dead.—
What, censure our black Lords with impious pen,
As paltry fishers fishing paltry men ?

(Like SIMON long ago, and ANDREW, taught
 By one call'd *Jesus* this misdeed of thought)
 No! No!—the orthodox prelatic dish is
 (Who can EAT men?) good swinging *loaves and fishes*.

The language of Poetry may be farther introduced to the assistance of prose. The Muses ought never to be engaged on any other than the generous side of Liberty, *Religious Liberty* in particular. Religious Liberty has Heaven alone for its object: the inspiration of the Muses should at all times be the inspiration of Heaven.

Uncommon evils need uncommon cures:
Truth sickens while Establishment endures;
The Gospel, tho' no cripple, halts on crutches,
 'The Priesthood's spirit of defacement such is;
Conversion languishes in dens of thieves,
 Or takes her nap in mitres and lawn-sleeves;
 And while his *Lordship's* chariot rolls along,
 Poor *Reformation* makes way with the throng.

Me other objects, other scenes delight,
 More dear tho' far less splendid to the sight;
 Beyond the stately Dean's or Prelate's ken,
 Men dark'ning doctrines, doctrines dark'ning men;
 Like those eclipses doubly deep that run
 Not only o'er the stars but o'er the sun.
 From torrid scorching heats beneath the line,
 How sweet to turn where milder planets shine!
 From elements that dread tornado's wrap,
 The lightning's sheeted fires and thunder's clap;
 To friendly monsoons and skies still serene,
 Delight, Peace, Temp'rature's benignant reign!

Religion—left to her own native pow'rs,
 To calm retirement, and reflecting hours;
 To work the noiseless tenor of her way,
 In thought by night, in virtuous deeds by day;
 (Like main-springs of a watch, no noise, stir showing,
 That keep their little worlds around them *going*)

How

How calculated, on the noblest plan,
 To form the general happiness of man!
 Lift him above the wretchedness of life,
 Like stars seen bright beyond the tempest's strife!
 In Nature's scale of being station'd high,
 His foot on Earth, but fixt on Heav'n his eye!
 God holding converse thus with human kind,
 And at all moments present with the mind!
 Angels at *Jacob's ladder* still attending,
 With blessings fraught, descending and ascending!
 Religion—such thy triumph, such thy aid,
 When pure from sullying hands of *Priests* self-made;
 'Thy *mental temple* clear'd of thieves and spells,
 Conscience no longer bought from him who sells:
 Who, at the altar kindling up false fire,
 Would erring *Inspiration* re-inspire;
 From Heav'n's recondite stores Promethean steal,
 And blund'ring *Revelation* re-reveal.—
 That is, on human police graft divine,
 Trim the sun's disk with oil to cause him shine;
 From blacksmith's bellows blow the mighty gale,
 To sweep the ocean and make navies fail.

Years may revolve (years moments rate in Heaven)
 E'er Truth, e'er Virtue, purg'd from human leaven;
 Our Bibles, giving life in every page,
 Be rescu'd from a worse than Gothic age:
 See after see be fill'd, stall after stall,
 Things all in order seeming, triumph all;
 While Seasons smile, suns complaisantly shine,
 The world for Cæsar made—O, Priestcraft, thine;
 Nothing but gen'rous Self-denial left
 Of bold example steadily bereft.
 What then?—tho' shadowing orbs eclipse the sun,
 They o'er him but to prove his glory run.
Jesus his word immutable hath pass'd,
 Immutable as God's own throne to last;
 To keep his free-born subjects undismay'd,
 His *little ones*, too lambkin-like afraid;
 That not *the gates of hell*, should hell assail,
 Against his blessed Kingdom shall prevail.

Sneers

Sneers at protest so kind to courts belong,
 Not to the lover of ingenuous song —
 Such choice assurance others may abuse,
 But not Truth's special flamen—not the Muse ;
 The Gospel's gentle, genuine handmaid, born
 To prize beyond dull medium, and to scorn ;
 Heav'n in her love, rapture, seraphic swell,
 And in her hate emphatic endless hell.—

*A thousand years, with God, one day appears,
 One day, one short short day a thousand years.*
 The Muse's solace this, when with high hand
Hierarchic Despotism would stalk the land ;
Ecclesial Pow'r, with insolent rude stride,
 Among her vot'ries half the world divide ;
 By Civil Government not still with-held,
 Her every blow of violence repell'd.
 Her *Convocation-doors*, with triple bolt,
 Lock'd up, lest Satan should within revolt ;
 Her *Courts* o'er-rul'd, reverse of mercy-seats,
 Chok'd, *Persecution*, not extinct thy heats ;
 Which else should into conflagrations rise,
 And form—*Elijah's* chariot for the skies.

Sure prelude to, blest omen of that hour,
 When Lucifer shall *twice* resign his pow'r,
 Wherever lodg'd, from cassock up to mitres,
 Thro' a long range of spiritual prize-fighters :
 When, like a cloud of locusts in the sun,
 Swept off by winter's friendly reign begun ;
 Church-ranks and titles shall be swept away
 From the pure bright expanse of Gospel-day :
 Bishops shrunk snail-like within vulgar ken,
 Happy and proud to rank as common men ;
 God, as in Nature, without Creed, test, thrall,
 In Revelation also—all in all.

What—Bishops send Atlantic seas to roam ?
 Rather be drones *Right Reverend* kept at home,
Church-

Church-robbers of bold front, but polish'd brow,
 That would reduce Religion to a vow ;
 (Which all the vile and worthless of mankind,
 Yet still be worthless and be vile, may bind)
 Subscribe their names against all future chance,
 As years advance in knowledge to advance ;
Altho' the just man's path, like morning light,
Shines into perfect day bright and more bright.
 Would with their annual rate-books in their hand,
 Mere gatherers of tythe o'erspread the land ;
 Like swarms of locusts eat our harvests up,
 Then sip and sneer at Pleasure's purple cup.—

O be America's pure regions free
 From the foul guilt to *Baal* of bended knee !
 Of almost worship paid to fellow men,
 Whether by trait'rous lips, or trait'rous pen !
Jesus himself commencing not our teacher,
 How vain inaffably each silk-rob'd preacher !

Ne'er, ne'er may virtuous Indian tribes behold
 To perfect dross transform'd the perfect gold !
 By hands impure Religion's beauty soil'd,
 Its native beauty back to Heav'n recoil'd !
 A *Saviour* born, prophetic veils withdrawn,
 Bishops to clothe in velvet and in lawn !
 (Like seraph's robes brought dazzling from the skies,
 To truck out reptiles into butterflies)
 Truth by burlesque and travasste adorn'd !
Jesus stuck up at Court, to prove how scorn'd !
 As heretofore him Herod's soldiers led
 Forth to the jeering mob, in purple clad.—
 To Indians never, never be it told,
 That *Judas* more than once his Master sold ;
 Sold him for what our Bishops sell their vows,
 Their sole reward what compasses their brows !
 His *Lordship's* brow by circling mitre prest,
 His *Lordship's* rochet, and his *Lordship's* crest,
 May guarantee at Court his *Lordship's* smile,
 His *Lordship's* Conscience slumbering all the while :
 But

But Death's no herald—mitre, rochet, crest,
 Ne'er purchas'd one *Saint's everlasting rest* ;
 Conditions ah revers'd with anguish fraught,
 How oft have rochets, crests and mitres bought !

Untaught may Indians evermore remain,
 Rather than hug an holy despot's chain :
 Priest-ridden slaves the wretchedest of slaves,
 Whose fetters but fall off them in their graves !
 Where *Jesus*, glorious to our sight reveal'd,
 Presents us Freedom's charter sign'd and seal'd ;
 Seal'd with his *Father's* seal, most good, most kind,
 And by ten thousand thousand angels sign'd :
 Then, turn'd the golden key, plac'd by himself
 On *Immortality's* expanded shelf ;
 Where no rapacious moths or spiders prey,
 No plund'ring kings or churchmen, worse than they !—

What—Indians teach hypocrisy and guile ?
 Hate while they sooth, to stab us while they smile ?
 Children of *Innocence*, unveil'd as morn !
Simplicity, thy last, thy earliest born !
 Teach them the sacerdotal love of self ?
 Idolatry ?—idolatry of self ?
 No !—nearer home let *Priests* and *Demons* tempt,
 Be one blest Continent at least exempt ;
 To prove from God's pure hands (unprov'd our shame)
 How harmless and how honest mortals came.

Let *them* adore their sun—his sacred beams
 From galaxy divine continuous streams ;
 Felt that blest moment seen—no comment needed,
 To prove our senses real, by doubt succeeded,
 Let *them* adore their sun—whose glorious light
 No base Creed limits, renders once less bright ;
 As little mole-hills, clust'ring o'er the lawn,
 Would intercept the progress of the dawn.—
 Should *choice* ev'n here by just amount be pric'd,
 Better no *Christ* at all, than *Antichrist* :
 Nature our tut'refs, Nature's God our judge,
 That never take a bribe, nor keep a grudge.

Hail,

Hail, like your Master once expos'd to scorn,
Like saints of old, Apostles, Prophets born;
While yet your footsteps blest our happy isle,
And men in you beheld even angels smile!
Immortals, hail! in mem'ry still alive,
While millions only by mere breath survive;
As snails, as insects, and as reptiles do,
Like them no nobler being to renew!
Hail, *men of God!* but not in modern sense,
With black array to livery o'er pretence.
Hail, CLARKE! Hail, HOADLEY! whose enlight'ning
runs

More glorious than and shall out-last the sun's.
'Tho' spots in each to curious eye—what then?
Suns without spots *too* bright, men *more* than men.—

Alas! tho' scarce from human foibles free,
When shall mankind their blessed fellows see?
'To rule the moral world, as suns the day,
And chase far worse than midnight shades away;
The deepest, dampest, heaviest shades we find,
Those that hang frigorific o'er the *Mind*!
O for a portion of that heav'nly fire
Which once did kindle round them and retire!
One spark electric of their sacred light,
To shrivel up the films that mar our sight!
Throw into shadow the false glare of pow'r,
That dazzles and bewitches every hour;
Alas! not kings and potentates alone,
Or satellitious dangles round a throne;
But *Cburch-men*, *Bishops*—heralds of the sky,
Yet never lifted from the earth their eye,
From stalls and sinecures—their *Master* twice
Sold for the worthless wafture of a price!

In plain prose—notwithstanding the novelty and unpopularity of the foregoing disquisition, it must appear on the very face of it, to the impartial attentive reader, who is accustomed to deem the right of thinking and feeling for himself equally sacred, that I have advanced nothing but

but what Jesus Christ and his Apostles, over and over again, have advanced, seventeen hundred years ago. Nay, as I am got into the longitude of novelty and the marvellous, I hesitate not to affirm, that some of the most distinguished writers of the English Church have, in effect, gone as unsystematically far as the present writer, were their positions and arguments drawn out to their just and proper length. But they were limners peculiarly circumstanced. They drew half-length portraits, never whole-length; because they were to be hung up, not in the great area of Humanity, but the common-hall of a CORPORATION, where the ceiling was low, and the motto on the door, NE SUTOR ULTRA CREPIDAM.—I particularly mean here the writers on the liberal side of the BANGORIAN CONTROVERSY. There can be no stationary human Power but what must be Supreme, either in the Head or the Representative. Now, the coadjutors of Bishop HOADLY as well as the excellent Bishop himself, gave up without demur all Supreme Visible Power in the Church; therefore all subordinate visible Power, even on their own data, ceased of course. They left the full amount of the Proof involved (not inextricably) in the induction, for others to disinvolve: for how could they acknowledge it themselves, even marshalled under the standard of Religious Independence and Gospel Liberty? The disinvolution of the Proof in the last instance, would have overturned the whole Hierarchy at once, and buried themselves, their stalls, sinecures and mitres, in the glittering ruin.—As the case stood, they opened themselves a back-door of escape, had they been hard pressed by an enraged, vindictive CONVOCATION.—In fact, it was often warmly recommended to the renowned Bishop of Bangor, as he had gone such unprecedented but glorious lengths already, to proceed farther in the luminous track of Church Reformation: but he excused himself. He had roused as it was such a spirit among his Brethren, the *genus irritabile vatum*, that it would have crushed him and all his avowed adherents at once, but for the well-timed interference of a single man happily invested with power; a singularly good and discerning Prince, GEORGE I. whose wisdom
and

and moderation, had it not been repeatedly over-ruled and counterpoised, would have done more, in the immortal, divine Cause of Religious Liberty, singly and unadvised, than ten whole Centuries of the Clergy ever conceived, ever wished, or ever meditated to do.

To all true Britons how affecting and mortifying will it be, should the excellent spirit of that cool, clear-sighted, generous, and, though a king, honest man, descend not through his royal successors of this realm to the latest generation!—Such a spirit adorning, animating, and enlightening the *British throne*, would seem our only resource of consolation in these degenerate days, when men of property commence our Representatives in the supreme council of the nation, merely (alas) as unblushing candidates for the sordid bribes and gratuities of *Prætorial Office*; at first the willing dupes, and then the prostituted abettors of corruption; commence our dictatorial *masters*, instead of dutifully acting up to their engagements and credentials as our elected, confidential *servants*: and when our Clergy, in lieu of setting grave, sober examples of domestic Virtue, an unambitious spirit and unaffected self-denial, to counterbalance the splendid vices and fashionable follies of our nobles and gentry; vie with these very nobles and gentry, nay, sometimes outstrip them, in every splendid vice, every fashionable folly! *Ventos contra venti luctantes.*

Our state is become morally desperate, as well as politically critical. *Paul* once exclaimed, *O, Foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* Alas! with what melancholy reason may we also now exclaim! *O, Foolish Britons, who hath bewitched you?*—Every genuine Disciple of *Jesus Christ* is summoned to exert himself, at the present selfish, brow-fallen period, in these words of Almighty God, which no power upon Earth has a right to suppress or silence. *Son of Man, prophesy against the SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL (THE CLERGY OF THE BRITISH ISLES) cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.—Should these hold their peace, the unswearing, unsubscribing, unliveried, unpensioned servants of*
Jesus

Jesus Christ, the stones would immediately cry out.—When the public Ministers of God give way to general depravity, to a licentious and effeminate relaxation of manners, our case is become truly dishonourable, truly piteous! And, that they have, all voices cry aloud.—Instead of being *burning and shining lights, cities set on a hill, and candles placed in candlesticks*; they would appear no better than the *foolish Virgins* of old, *when their oil was all spent, and their lamps were gone out.* Pertinent are the words of the poet,

Omnipotent, supreme, from glory's throne,
 GOD said, "let light shine forth, and light forth shone:"
 'The PRIESTHOOD, Light, thy shadow to compose,
 Rejoin'd, "let darkness rise, and darkness rose."

Yet, notwithstanding the experience of a thousand years preserving unblunted the keen edge of the above sarcasm, a certain member of the *Irish Hierarchy* had the confidence, very lately, in several crowded Churches, and in the broad face of noon-day, to preach up the unspotted excellence of Canons, Prayer-Books, Creeds and Litanies; though one and all of them containing BLASPHEMY and IDOLATRY in direct terms:—so that the Cathedral Orator only adopted the words of *the silversmiths and craftsmen of like occupation, crying out, for the space of two hours*—GREAT, GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS.—And why so high a strain of encomium? Because such men as the sermonizing eulogist composed and enjoined these celebrated substitutes of the Bible.—All the time, the Reverend alms-preaching DEAN was bedaubing his own beloved, glorious, and godlike-self, *i. e.* men, on the mountebank stage of Establishment, in no respects different from himself, the Compilers of the Liturgy, with the tawdry and varnish of panegyric.—To all such theological, egotizing, silken, downy Deans and Doctors (our modern *Scribes and Pharisees* and *Rulers* of the *Synagogue*) the foregoing *Strictures* are particularly recommended.—*Though I bestow ALL my goods to feed the poor, and have not CHARITY, it profiteth me nothing.* So that *Charity*, in the Apostolical

Apostolical sense, may subsist, and does subsist, as the sovereign criterion of Gospel merit, independent of ALMS-GIVING, even occasionally hackneyed and trumpeted from the pulpit.—*Charity vaunteth not herself—is not puffed up—doth not behave herself unseemly—seeketh not her own.*—So that *Charity, divine Charity*, the spirit of the Gospel, may be supposed non-resident and non-effective even in that bosom whose warmth is the hottest calenture of Establishment, and whose beat of vitality is the loudest reverbatory echo of Corporational bravado and self-adulation.

What wonder is it, that we continue neither to grow wiser nor better in divine things, in true Religion, when *professed* teachers of Christianity, learned academics and graduated theologians, *lest they should be put out of the synagogue, loving the praise of men more than the praise of God*, can compose and pronounce Sermons at this time of day, that offer downright insult to the divinely-constituted Human Understanding, and unavoidably tend to throw the simple, unaffected Gospel of Christ, *the meek and lowly Jesus*, into burlesque and buffoonery!—Indeed, no Establishment, as such, can grow wiser or better, for she has *taken away the KEY OF KNOWLEDGE*, delivering it into the hands of kings and princes, who will not suffer her to be wiser or better than themselves.—Yet would it be incomparably more civil and generous in our ecclesiastical Governors, to interdict us the possession of our Bibles altogether, like their elder brethren of the *Vatican* and *Conclave*, than to tantalize us with the nominal use, without the benefit of that precious volume. Nay, it would be a selfish consistency of conduct pardonable enough in people who affect to be *wiser in their generation than the children of light*; as the closer and oftener we read the Oracles of God, the thrice-sacred Scriptures, the stronger lined and more obviously legible appear the genuine lineaments of *Antichrist* in their foreheads.

Dissenters, for whom as such I would ever wish to have the highest respect, are in the happy situation of not being tied down to lifeless, listless forms. Let them not
abuse

abuse then this original and divine privilege, by commencing voluntary slaves to the very worst of servitudes—their own *much speaking*, and *vain repetitions*, like the *Heathen*. I here particularly mean *Prayer*. Let their words have the Scriptural excellence of being *few and well ordered*. Let them never lose sight of that short but sententious model left by *Jesus Christ* himself for their imitation. *After this manner*, says he, *pray ye*. But what Dissenting Teachers pray after *this manner*? I know very few but what, without punctilio or demur, prefer their *own* manner to their Master's, by running out into verbose long-winded informations to the Hearer of prayer of *this, that* and the *other* impertinent circumstance, which ought ever to be decently couched in general petition, being oftentimes unworthy the ear of Common Sense, not to mention the transcendant Majesty of Heaven; who scarcely requires to be told of every spider that preys along its lines, or snail that carries its house of concealment on its back.—*Jesus Christ*, if I am not mistaken, knew perfectly well, at least as well as any modern Presbyter, what was, is, and always will be pleasing to the supreme object and propitiator of prayer. For his sake therefore, and from the worthiest of all sentiments, that of pleasing God, let us in this instance follow our Lord's example, who assures us, *that he has set us an example that we should follow his steps*.

When we address a patron or mistress, how guarded, concise and select are our expressions! we weigh every sentiment, every sentence, every word, with the nicest scrutiny! Above all, what delicate care do we take not to tire or disgust the attention! Shall we then trifle and ramble without ceasing, as pithless in the energy of our thoughts, as slovenly in our manner, before the throne and in the immediate presence of the Almighty Father?—We pray for kings, queens, princes, princesses, counsellors round the king's throne, rulers, governors, magistrates, nobles, bishops, curates, whom for God to bless and propitiate as they often severally act, would be blaspheming the honour of his own name: but where or when do we think of beseeching the Father of mercies to
send

feed us his blessed Son's exquisite and characteristic faculty of—SAYING LITTLE?—He that thinks and feels much, will always say little, as a man's heart and tongue can never hold out long together; the movement of the latter being voluntary, and that of the former involuntary; God has only access to the one, but every cold and lifeless echo acts in farce and mimicry with the other. The deeper the water, the fewer are its agitations.—Preposterous indeed! because we lack a Saviour's *spirit* of utterance, shall we make up for that loss by the *quantity*; not considering that the more we say, we become more and more unlike him, who *spoke as never man spoke*?—Farther, as I am upon this subject,

Let it not be the approbrium of *Dissenters*, to take their lessons of wisdom from the Servants, instead of their Lord and Master; the cause of infinite and fatal mistakes in Religion: soaking their palates, spiritually libidinous, in the loose love-songs of Solomon, or losing their intellectual plummet in the depths and intricacies of doubtful obscure Prophecy.—To draw out resemblances between *Jesus Christ* and Solomon's kept mistresses, is, methinks, one of the most outrageous and shocking indecencies of modern Christianity; and is downrightly *forcing* Deists and Infidels to sneer with increasing contempt both at the Gospel and its teachers. The vulgar ear is tickled and gratified hereby; but the soul is tainted and corrupted.—For shame, ye preachers of a Gospel so blushing chaste, and so shame-facedly holy—Ye quite forget that we have but ONE Master in Scripture; and that to take a doctrine or mode of instruction preferably from *any other* whatever, is the same thing at this day as to have applied personally to *Peter* or *Andrew*, or *Thomas*, when upon earth, instead of JESUS CHRIST, for counsel and instruction.—Has the beautiful and pathetic morality of *the Son of God*, lost all credit and veneration amongst us? or, like our coin, is it grown deficient in weight and value, to be remanded to the mint for a renewal of stamp and currency?—In the presence of their Master, in whose presence they ever are in the New Testament,

Testament, who prithee is *Paul*? who is *Apollos*? who is *Cephas*?

Indeed, the above strictures I would especially apply to what are called our *orthodox* or *Old-light* Dissenters; a set of men, both teachers and taught, in the result of their monopolizing, bigoted spirit, nearly a-kin to Papists, at least, to Moravians, the disciples of the abhorrent *Nicholas Lewis*, Count *Zinzendorf*: consequently, the greatest enemies, though all the while vapouring professory friends, of the true Gospel of *Jesus Christ*.—Men that believe, *because* they do not understand: cry up the sacredness of mystery, *because* they are a mystery to each other, as well as to the world around them: and profess much, *because* they feel little.—Men, that by flocking and crowding together, when the Sacramental raree-show of fast-days, or the hue and cry of an artful popular preacher, invites them, think they honour that great and good BEING (like midges and hornets darkening the sun's ray) who renounces all honour but that of the inward affections, *worshipping him in spirit and in truth*; bosom-piety and closet-devotion, always, except in virtuous actions and self-denial, silent and unseen.

For God's sake, let the Worship of God be kept pure, unaffected and holy, some where or another amongst us; as the laws of the land by no means *prevent* us from being at all times iconoclasts and non-idolaters. If not preserved in this pure, unaffected, holy state, among DISSENTERS, where shall we look for it, with the lowest sentiment of reverence for our Bibles?—

Right Reason is the wisdom of God in creation and providence, Religion is *that* right reason; therefore, every acceptable Christian worshipper must be *rational*, or be worse than no worshipper at all. Reason, or the Human Understanding, was the first Revelation from Heaven: of course, the Revelation by *Jesus Christ*, in its intelligibility and usefulness, must be founded on Reason, or else have no foundation at all. In fact, God is only supporting the honour of the *first*, by the *last*; that

that is, supporting his own majesty and government, the awful reverence and moral knowledge of which were near totally lost among mankind, by the appearance of *his Son*: otherwise, we must unavoidably suppose his *former self* acting uncompulsively in repugnance to his *latter self*: in other words, that, in order to establish his Son's derived subordinate identity, he first annihilated his own sovereignty, self-subsistence and unchangeableness.—To keep clear of suppositions so monstrous, Reason, or the Human Understanding, comes in with serene and decisive dignity: but if we admit not Reason's judicial supremacy in this important matter, there is no other power in Nature capable or authorized to return the final and weighty negative. The following sentiments and expressions of *the Son of God*, however, are sovereignly definitive, and relieve us from the unworthy necessity even of a doubt in so solemn and critical an affair. By him REASON is snatched from the murdering hands of base-born traitors—*Bigots and Fanatics*—and is set down, clothed in the immaculateness of a sunbeam, and uttering forth the voice of infallibility, on her auspicious throne of more than mortal elevation.—*He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear. Whoso readeth, let him understand. Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me. If ye believe not me, believe the works. What is written in the law? how readeest thou? If any man shall say unto you, lo here is Christ, lo there, believe it not: for there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders: behold, I have told you before. Beware of false Prophets, who come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: by their fruits ye shall know them.*—These are all unequivocal admonitions and commands that presuppose powers in the human mind, in one word, REASON, capable of distinguishing *the true from the false Prophet; the true from the false Christ*: that is, of weighing the *Christian Revelation* in the scale of the Understanding, the *Creational Revelation*, and judging of its value and excellence accordingly. In any other sense our Saviour's words are mere wind, which they can never be.

The injury done to the intellectual interests of Society, by licensed systems and standards, is inconceivable. They are the cause of spiritual ignorance among all orders of People almost beyond belief: and under their fanatic dominion, one man tells another in so many words, if you do not consent to go to Heaven in *my way*, you shall not go at all.—In this notorious respect likewise, two sister Professions most disgracefully resemble school-divinity. The lengthened, technical, voluminous, and enormously expensive process of the Law, lays insidious hands on that property it professes to secure and protect; we are righted till we are wronged, and we are redressed till we are undone. And Physic, by authority from Pharmacopoeia's and Dispensatories (medical Creeds) shortens the lives, and periclitates the comforts of the human species, beyond war itself, *bella horrida bella*. Nature, divine Nature cripples on crutches to the footstool of Art, and kisses the foulest spot of her Papal toe; and our Constitutions, which repeated labour and excesses have not been able to destroy, fly for destruction to every nostrum-vending Licentiate, that condescends to quit his chariot to take our fee.—Theology, as a profession corporate, a collegiate deposit, makes us hypocrites; Law, beggars; and Physic—mortal before our time, too soon the texton's landed property. In these three renowned several Arts of making money, whatever is most excellent and valuable, might commodiously be reduced to a few simple, self-evident propositions. But then—*hinc lacrymæ rerum*—what should become of *this, that*, and the *other* august academic body, multitudinous as our tomes of polemical faith, the filed bills of our Attorneys, and *recipes* of our Pharmacopolists?—Yet, alas! the more numerous our Divines, Lawyers and Physicians, the more, it would appear, we are distracted in our property, the more wofully debilitated and valetudinary in our minds, as well as our bodies.—Such are the effects of Systems scholastic: every man distrusting and neglecting his own powers, the Divinity within him, in order to lean on the powers of his neighbour, who has none to spare more than himself. If Theology, if Law, if Physic goes,

goes, in any one instance, beyond Common Sense, cannot be brought down by those who affect to comprehend it to the level of a plain downright man's understanding—it *must absolutely lack common honesty*. But where is the man so ingenuously hardy, of such disinterested probity, supposing him a teacher or practitioner in any of these Sciences, as dare to prefer society to himself, by avowing so much? where is he? show me him—give him a name.—Propitious everlastingly be his endeavours! immortal be his memory!—

Moreover, if some person or persons shall not be found nobly self-denied enough, superior enough to the common vanities and temptations of life, to endeavour the reformation of the world, to what will it, must it tend?—to its own self-destruction assuredly; guilty of that self-violence, that suicide, in the long run, on account of which individuals should be denied the common rights of sepulture, and be staked in the highway.—The world long ere now had fallen, like Time, on its own side, but for great and illustrious enlighteners and reformers of *that* world.—Such men, therefore, as the writer of *Sketches of the History of Man*, I would behold with the utmost reverence and esteem: who with the calm serenity of setting life, but vigour and vivacity of its brightest noontide period, teaches us the noblest lessons of true wisdom, by the most agreeable and captivating vehicle. Would men of fortune and condition follow his highly to be imitated example, instead of squandering the one, and debasing the other, by ways and means that sink our nobles and gentry to the level of their coachmen and lackeys, in what an happy world should we live!—But I only just touch on these subjects at present. Another time awaits the writer to extend and illustrate them, as being of general and intrinsic importance; unawed by popular names, unshackled by fashionable authorities, and unseduced by the little pecuniary concerns of one's little self.—To return therefore,

It would seem one of the most unparalleled and unaccountable conceits upon record, that a set of men amongst

us, in the most emphatic but disgraceful sense, *just such as we ourselves are*, should be supposed and self-flattered as capable of *adding* weight, dignity, or perspicuity to the commands and precepts of *Jesus Christ*, to whom *the spirit was given without measure*; and who assures us *he finished the work his Father gave him to do*: whereas, if we give ear to our badged and ticketed preachers, when he said so, he defiled his lips with a falsehood; and, for THEM to finish, left *unfinished the work which his Father gave him to do*.—The precepts and commands of our Lord no more require to be *fescued*, by the sacerdotal finger, than, by the astronomical, the sun to have his spots brushed off.—Having the New Testament, in its native divine form, in our possession, is assuredly the same thing as if we had *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles living and preaching among us.—Were they personally living and preaching at this day, would a Bishop or a Dean, sweeping along even in all his pride of inrobement, venture to impose silence on any one of them, or to take his place? Though corporeally dead, and orally silent, still are they virtually living and preaching—not to learned theological Schools, and confederating Hierarchies, but to the simple untaught multitude around; to every even the meanest Christian; would the jackdaws and magpies of Establishment cease their eternal clatter, and suffer us to attend to the messengers from on high.

When shall we open our weighed down eyelids from the speechless, senseless trance of a thousand years? When shall we refrain from beholding the impious farce, acted over and over again, of the Devil taking the *Saviour* of Mankind *up into an exceeding high mountain, and shewing him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*; tempting the Son of God to *fall down and worship him*?—Satan, even Satan, evinced himself capable of being rebuked and abashed: but when shall our Bishops discover the Luciferic sensibility of rebuke and abashment?—Notorious it is, that the very identical things our Saviour (truly the Son of God) *rejected*, on account of not falling down to worship the prince of darkness, our Bishops actually *solicit and enjoy*—the kingdoms of this world, and the

the power and glory of them: that very power and glory the devil claims as his own in Scripture, and parcels out as he wills. These are his words, which I will suppose for once, to save the blushing decorum of the Episcopate, a mitre and a blush but ill consorting, no Bishop ever reads, at least takes care never to remember. Listen ye Graces Metropolitan, ye Lordships, ye emblazoned Fathers in God, Right and Most Reverend—listen to your great *Benefactor*, *All this power will I give thee* (says Satan to our Lord) *and the glory of them*: FOR THAT IS DELIVERED UNTO ME, AND TO WHOMSOEVER I WILL, I GIVE IT. Luke iv. 6.—*Habeat sibi et suis.*

Tho' Pauls and Peters worthy of *mere* hire,
At chariots PRIESTS, like PHAETON, aspire.

I shall here be told of the Reformation, that candied sugar-plumb in the mouth of the Hierarchy, which she is incessantly rolling over and under her tongue, without tasting: by being tasted it should be dissolved.—But to what has our so much celebrated Reformation amounted? To little else than this. It translated Church Tyranny, Church Superstition and Church Mystery, from Italy to England, from the Vatican and Inquisition, to the Houses of Convocation and the Star-Chamber; instead of one inexorable ecclesiastical despot, constituting as many (equally inexorable) as we have Bishops and Dignitaries.—How righteous and sagaciously distinguishing then was *that* Prince, who laid an arrest on the haughty Anglican Pope; that is, ordered the porter to lock the doors of the Convocation (the lion kept within his den, and the burning flame within its furnace) to prevent the prosecution of a worthy amiable man, whose only misdemeanor, was the misdemeanor of Jesus Christ; and whose only foible was the foible of the Gospel: offering Freedom, *freedom indeed, the glorious Liberty of the Children of God*; offering Light, *the morning light of the just man's path, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day*.—Long after HOADLEY's opponents have been mercifully treated by being forgot; long after an unscriptural, illiberal System of Church Police and Authority, though supported

ported by our WARBURTONS, BALGUY'S, RUTHERFORTHS, &c. has fallen into ruins under its own weight, like its emblem heretofore, the Temple of Jerusalem; shall this truly Right Reverend Divine, with his great and virtuous Friend Dr. CLARKE, be held in hallowed venerable memory: the only accent of regret lingering on the lips of Posterity—*their not having gone a little farther*. But Men and Geniuses of the first order, are like the sun: he has spots, but they prevent him not from shining, from warming and illuminating the world.

Many persons, no doubt, insisted under the banners of our politically-spiritual Establishments, will deem themselves called upon to defend their CALLING (we may style it their *Effectual Calling*) from the attacks of the present writer. If so, no proofs on their part shall, or ought to be admitted, deduced from any human authority whatsoever: every man, in *Christ's Kingdom*, unless when his virtues and piety make it otherwise, being perfectly equal, from the highest installed dignitary, an Archbishop, to the nakedest *believing* beggar that picks up a rag from the dunghill.—*Revelation* can only be supported, at this day, as it was confessedly supported in the days of the Apostles. It commenced without *Etablissement*, nay in opposition to it; it was ESTABLISHED without *Etablissement*; and it can never become universal but without *Etablissement*.—Christianity existed pure and genuine long before *Great-Britain* emerged from the depths of heathenism and idolatry; and can only be defended on principles equally authentic and decisive, were even G. B. swallowed up by the seas that surround her.—God forbid, any calamity should ever befall her thrice auspicious isles! that she should ever cease to be the seat of true glory and honour; of Civil Liberty, Public Spirit, Virtuous Patriotism, Liberal Commerce, and of all useful Arts and Sciences! but God forbid, CHRISTIANITY should receive any new stamp of authority from her spiritual mints! any new currency whatsoever from her Convocations and General Assemblies!

The LAYMAN has but one thing more of consequence to add, before he lay down his controversial pen; that pen

pen which has been so deeply dipt in *spiritual treason* against the Reverend, Right Reverend, and Most Reverend Priesthood (what a pity there is not an higher than the superlative degree *Most!*) against our mitred lawn-sleeved *Fathers in God*, My Lords the Bishops, senatorially inrobed.—It is this: to specify his authority once more for taking upon him what is usually accounted the business of the Clergy: *Whosoever shall confess ME before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven.* Our Clergy confess—not *Jesus Christ*, but—Convocations, General Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries, and—ONE ANOTHER.—To the above may be subjoined this truly alarming passage to all anti-confessors of our Lord: *Whosoever shall be ashamed of ME and of MY WORDS, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.*—For acting up to the spirit, dignity and latitude of this Commission, even without *Canonical Ordination*, without *bands, gown, tithe* or *stipend*, no apology whatever should seem necessary from the writer: respecting his manner and literary talents, so often as apology becomes urgent, the candid and good-natured Reader, who considers the many unfavourable (though quite fashionable) circumstances bearing hard against his undertaking, will, he flatters himself, be always generously ready to offer one for him.—Perhaps the writer might have been more attentive to the *lucidus ordo*, by dividing his work into chapters, sections, &c. Instead of this, every one is left to his own choice, to stop reading when and where he pleases, according as he finds himself disposed and interested.—No one can be in more indulgent hands than his own: and to be indulgent to himself *alone*, should seem a piece of unlovely selfishness, of which the writer would not willingly suspect any Reader.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

As many Typographical Errors as occurred upon a revifal flicht and (unavoidably) fhort-timed, are marked below: many others, no doubt, will occur to the accurate Reader, to try, but it is hoped, not to exhaust his good-nature.

Page 4, line 2 from the bottom, after tells, read *us*.—Page 6, head line, after Rome, read *be*.—Page 12, line 10 from the bottom, after affairs, place a *colon*.—Page 21, the note, for Ifaiah cviii. read *Ifaiah lviii*.—Page 22, line 2 from the bottom, before mire, read *the*.—Page 24, line 11 from the top, for frem, read *from*.—Page 30, line 21 from the bottom, for refcillatory, read *refocillitory*.—Page 32, line 33, for unparelled, read *unparalleled*.—Page 33, line 18 from the bottom, for constant, read *constantly*.—Page 63, line 2 from the bottom, for check, read *cheek*.—Page 70, line 7 from the top, for self-dependant, read *self-dependent*; idem, line 22, for Acherantic, read *Acherontic*.—Page 73, line 6 from the top, for independant, read *independent*.—Page 77, line 3 from the top, for will, read *would*.—Page 86, line 6 from the bottom, for vero, read *vera*.—Page 96, line 14 from the bottom, after communicate, read *it*.—Page 103, line 12 from the top, dele *a*.—Page 111, line 9 from the bottom, for over, read *ever*.—Page 113, line 5 from the bottom, for thofe, read *theſe*.—Page 117, line 2 from the bottom, for will, read *ſhall*.—Page 143, line 13 from the top, for ſerve, read *ſerves*.—Page 164, line 3 from the top, before kings, dele *as*.—Page 199, line 9 from the bottom, for eminent, read *imminent*.—Page 205, line 18, for their, read *our*.—Page 211, line 38, for brethrenhood, read *brotherhood*.—Page 220, line 16 from the bottom, for to, read *too*.—Page 248, line 12, before ſentiment, dele *all*.—Page 310, line 5, from the top, for what a degree, read *what degree*.—Page 319, line 20 from the bottom, for leatheran, read *leathern*.



